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NOTES ON THE PROPER PSALMS

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NOTES ON
THE PROPER PSALMS
FOR HOLY DAYS

BY
A. C. A. HALL, D.D.
BISHOP OF VERMONT

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INTRODUCTION

THESE notes are the result of a good many years accumulation in an interleaved Psalter for personal use. And manuscript copies have been found helpful by several persons. In virtue of this experience they are offered to others, as an aid to an intelligent and devout use of the Psalms, especially in their application to the holydays and seasons of the Christian Year.

Many persons acknowledge that they flounder through the Psalms without much attempt to sing with the understanding, and without much hope of doing so with the helps that are within their reach. In particular they are at a loss to explain, save by a text or two, the appropriateness of the special Psalms appointed for different days.

Objections [1] to the appointment of Proper Psalms for the days commemorating great mysteries of our Faith are really criticisms of forced and unreal applications of particular texts and phrases, or of an arbitrary and fanciful use of types. The legitimate appropriateness of a Psalm to mysteries in our Lord's life is to be found in the general meaning of the whole Psalm, and in the moral and spiritual signifi-

[1] Such as Dr. Cheyne's in *The Christian use of the Psalms, with Essays on the Proper Psalms of the Anglican Prayer Book.*

cance of the Christian truth. So the Psalm rises up to a higher fulfilment than the original reference, whatever this may have been, could afford. In Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the ideal Son of man, all true experiences of human nature and human-kind find their fulfilment. All prophets, priests and kings, all warriors, sufferers and holy men represent or shadow forth some aspects of His life and work and character.

In this way, as St. Augustine continually insists, all the Psalms may be regarded as the utterance of Christ, and are to be joined in by Christian people, members of His body, animated by His Spirit, not merely in the sense of their original authors, but as they have passed through His mind. This is the principle of Christian interpretation and use followed in these Notes.[1]

With this principle in mind it will be seen that, while all we can learn about the authorship, and the date and circumstances of a Psalm's composition is helpful as throwing light upon its meaning, yet these are of *comparatively* little importance to its Christian use. A Psalm may belong to David, or to a singer under the later monarchy, or to Maccabæan times, without affecting the sense in which simple Christian people understand and repeat it. The Psalms express fundamental experiences of the human soul. Their utterances of praise and worship, of aspiration and penitence, of petition and meditation are suggested by all sorts

[1] See e.g., Ps. 16, p. 75; Ps. 22, p. 62; Ps. 24, p. 96; Ps. 40, p. 23; Ps. 45, p. 12.

of experiences of joy and sorrow and need, colored indeed but not called forth by the immediate circumstances. And, as has been said, the utterances of man find their highest realization in the Son of man.

It may be thought presumptuous for one who is not a Hebrew scholar to venture on even so slight a commentary as this on the Psalter. Without in the least ignoring the limitations thus set, there may be an advantage for ordinary people, intelligent but not scholarly, to have the sort of explanations they need gathered and suggested by one not too far removed from their own position, and not tempted to distract them from what they need by giving all the arguments by which reasonable conclusions are reached.

It will be seen at once that there is much gathering of help from others — far more than is marked by the avowed quotations. In particular free use has been made (in word as well as thought) of Dr. Kirkpatrick's commentary on *The Book of Psalms*.[1] Permission for this was understood to be kindly granted when the idea of such a compilation was mentioned some years ago to the author of the larger work. It is hoped that many may be led to the study of such commentaries in order to enlarge, or correct, the suggestions of this little manual, the size and contents of which are distinctly limited with a view to the possibility of its use in church while joining in the recitation of the Psalter.

[1] In the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. (University Press, 1902; New York, The Macmillan Co.)

Attempts are being made in various parts of our communion by the provision of more Proper Psalms and of Selections of Psalms to bring about a more intelligent and intelligible use of the Psalter, which furnishes, let it be remembered, the foundation and substance of what may be called the Choir Office, as distinct from the Eucharistic Service at the Altar, of the Catholic Church from the earliest times and throughout the centuries. May this little book, based on the actual use of the American Church, contribute in some degree to this end! As a further help toward this the author hopes to print, perhaps as a companion volume, the substance of some simple lectures on the Psalter, its composition and use. To include these in this volume would unduly increase its bulk.

The headings prefixed to the Proper Psalms are with few exceptions those which were suggested by my dear friend Dr. Body (then Professor of Old Testament interpretation at the General Theological Seminary) for an appendix to the author's Paddock Lectures (1903) on *The use of Holy Scripture in the public Worship of the Church.* There is also given a fuller table showing the fundamental thought of each Psalm in the Psalter, the fundamental thought that is behind the historical setting and any Messianic or spiritual application of a Psalm.

One point should have a word of explanation. The word Jahveh is employed in the Notes for the sacred name of the covenant God of Israel (Ex. III. 13–18, VI. 2, 3). This has not been done without considerable hesitation. But the author has come

by degrees to the clear opinion that there is a distinct gain (outweighing considerations on the other side) in making plain to all that the title which our ordinary Bibles and Prayer Books translate as The LORD is a proper name and not a mere designation. Capital letters as a matter of fact do not generally convey this idea to the eye, while they do not reach the ear. Jahveh is the covenant God of Israel, the Self-Existent One, as contrasted with the gods of many of the heathen nations. This contrast is specially prominent in the Psalms of the time of the Return from the Captivity, when Israel had seen the folly of idol worship, and, whatever faults remained, was freed from temptations to this sin. The distinction between the titles Jahveh and Lord may also serve to remind us that with few exceptions the Psalms are to be regarded as said *by* and *with* our Lord Jesus Christ rather than *to* Him. He is primarily the Leader, and only incidentally the Object, of our worship in the prayers and praises of the Psalter, as in the Oblation of the Eucharist.

A. C. A. H.

BURLINGTON, VERMONT
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31. A protestation of unfailing trust in God amidst great calamities. (Easter Even.)
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121. God's protection of His people. (All Saints'.)
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139. A meditation on the omnipresence and omniscience of God.
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141. A prayer for faithfulness amid the snares of the ungodly.
142. A prayer for God's help who alone can save.

143. A prayer for mercy in great distress. (Ash-Wednesday.)
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147. Praise for God's works in Nature and in Providence.
148. The praise of God by all His works in heaven and on earth. (Michaelmas.)
149. The praise of God by His redeemed people. (All Saints'.)
150. A general doxology. (Trinity.)

SELECTIONS OF PSALMS

The Selections of Psalms in the Prayer Book (distinct from Proper Psalms for certain days) may be regarded as specially appropriate for the following occasions:

First. 1, 15, 91. For Saints' days, or at a Confirmation.

Second. 4, 31 to v. 7, 91, 134. For a night service.

Third. 19, 24, 103. For festivals of Apostles or Evangelists.

Fourth. 23, 34, 65. In connection with the Holy Communion.

Fifth. 26, 43, 141. Penitential. For Holy Week.

Sixth. 32, 130, 121. Penitential.

Seventh. 37. For Saints' days or commemorations.

Eighth. 51, 42. Penitential.

Ninth. 72, 96. For Christmas and Epiphany seasons, or for Missions.

Tenth. 77. For a day of humiliation.

Eleventh. 80, 81. Intercession for the Church.

Twelfth. 84, 122, 134. For a dedication festival.

Thirteenth. 85, 93, 97. Thanksgiving for the Church.

Fourteenth. 102. Penitential.

Fifteenth. 107. For an occasion of Thanksgiving.

Sixteenth. 118. For Palm Sunday, or the Easter season.

Seventeenth. 123, 124, 125. For an occasion of Penitence or Intercession.
Eighteenth. 139, 145. For Saints' days.
Nineteenth. 147. Festal.
Twentieth. 148, 149, 150. Festal.

ANNOTATIONS ON THE PROPER PSALMS

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

(MORNING)

Psalm 8. The dignity of man by God's choice realized in the Incarnation.

GOD'S choice of man, notwithstanding his physical frailness, to be the chief revelation of Himself and His representative on earth. It matters little whether we think of the Psalm as composed by David as a shepherd on the plains of Bethlehem, or as belonging to a later and more reflective age.

v. 1. God's greatness. His Name is the expression of His glory in Nature and Providence.

2. Understand "*Yet* out of the mouth." The mere existence of the infant with its wonderful capacities, still more its simple faith, is a witness of the being and character of God. This witness confounds those who would oppose God's purposes or question His Providence. The Hosannas of the children on Palm Sunday were an instance and illustration of this witness, while the rulers of the Jews were hardening their hearts in contemptuous hostility. Matt. XXI. 15, 16.

3, 4. "*When* I consider," etc. The insignificance of man compared with the heavenly bodies.

5. Yet for him God has a great purpose. He is made *but little lower* than the angels, the heavenly beings; and by virtue of the Incarnation he is raised

above them, taken into a closer fellowship with God. Heb. II. 5 sq. God's design for man is realized in man's great Representative, the incarnate Son of God. The Psalm is said also on Ascension Day, when the exaltation of human nature in Christ is perfectly illustrated. The Hebrew may be translated "God" instead of "the angels." Man was made in God's image, and so his nature was fitted to be the instrument for the fullest manifestation of God, in the Incarnation.

6–8. Gen. I. 26 sq. (*a*) By his powers of intelligence man has dominion over the lower creatures, though they are so much more powerful than he is. Dan. VII. 13, 14: the human conquers the brute.

(*b*) in our day by the investigation of the great laws of nature, and by the utilization of its forces, man's supremacy over nature is more clearly realized.

(*c*) Still more is this supremacy seen when man rises to the full dignity of his being, in Christ, and not only his mental but his moral and spiritual faculties are quickened by the Spirit of God.

"Man is what he is, because the Son of God has taken upon Him man's nature." (Perowne.)

Psalm 50. The Great Assize.

The Psalms of Asaph, of which this is one, are chiefly poems of moral instruction. Comp. Psalms LXXIII–LXXXIII.

Here, as in Isa. I and Micah VI, God is dramatically represented as putting Israel upon its trial in the face of all nature.

1–6. The advent of God to judge His people. *He comes to Sion, the perfection of beauty, or flashes forth therefrom, as before at Sinai, with symbols of His presence.* Ex. XIX. 16, Heb. XII. 18.

At Sinai He came to give the Law; at Sion He explains it.

5. *Saints*, i.e., the consecrated people. The question is how far they correspond with their calling, and with the covenant of obedience to which their sacrifices pledge them. Ex. XXIV. 7, 8. Comp. note on Ps. XL. 8–10, p. 23.

6. While the defendants are being gathered, the psalmist hears the heavens, who have been summoned to witness the trial, proclaim the justice of the Judge.

7–15. God declares the offering that He desires.

7. testify *to* thee.

8. The ceremonial worship was unexceptionable, but that which it should represent was lacking, 14, 15 (the duties implied in the commandments of the first table).

Omit "because they were not." The outward offerings *were* continually before Him, a mockery when not expressive of self-oblation

9–13. Any poor and gross idea of sacrifice — as if God needed the external gift — must be got rid of.

14. These spiritual sacrifices are what God desires. Comp. Heb. XIII. 15 based on Hosea XIV. 2; the lips uttering praise take the place of the animal sacrifices.

16–21. Denunciation of hypocrites, *who offer a merely formal and external worship, while they prac-*

tise the very things that God abhors, especially in breaches of the commandments of the second table. Comp. Romans II. 23–29.

21. They think that God will be bribed with their external gifts. They mistake His longsuffering for indifference. But there will come a day of judgment. Rom. II. 3–6, Acts XVII. 31.

All the judgments on individuals and nations, when by a righteous retribution they reap what they have sown, lead up to the final manifestation of God's righteous judgment at the appearing of the Son of man in glorious majesty to judge the quick and the dead.

22, 23. Warning and promise. *There may be a practical forgetting of God, His true character and requirements, in the midst of much outward profession of allegiance to Him.*

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

(EVENING)

Psalms 96 and 97 belong to a group of psalms probably composed for the dedication of the second Temple, B.C. 516. (Ezra VI. 15–22.)

OBSERVE the contempt for idolatry felt by restored Israel after contact with its abominations and folly during the exile.

God's intervention to deliver His people from captivity and exile had been a real "Coming of the Lord."

The subsequent liturgical use of such psalms served to keep alive the Messianic expectation, and to prepare the way for the advent of God in Christ. The Messiah comes in the name of the Lord, to set up God's reign on earth. From the Incarnation onward this is to be a continually progressive development, until its final consummation and the entire subdual of all opposing forces. I Cor. xv. 24–28.

Psalm 96. Rejoicing in Jahveh the righteous judge.

1. A *new* song, called forth by the fresh manifestation of God's power and goodness.

all the whole earth. Not Israel alone, but all the nations, to whom the chosen people (whether in the Old or the New Covenant) are to minister.

2. *salvation.* The rescue from the Captivity a figure of the redemption from bondage to sin and Satan.

9. *in the beauty of holiness*, i.e., in holy array; as the priests were to minister only in holy attire, so must all nations now be clothed with righteousness.

10. *judge righteously.* Comp. 13. This is the great cause for rejoicing, that Jahveh, the righteous judge, reigneth. Comp. Isa. IX. 7. The world is not under the dominion of rival deities, acting in arbitrary fashion, with selfish, cruel, unjust, immoral ends and standards. The supreme ruler is the All-holy One. Ps. IX. 7–8. Just in proportion as we are on the side of right and truth shall we welcome His manifestation. Comp. Rev. XV. 3, 4.

11–13. In the establishment of God's righteous rule the psalmist sees the prelude of the Messianic age, which is to bring harmony and peace to all creation.

Psalm 97. Rejoicing in Jahveh the righteous judge.

2. *the habitation of his seat*, i.e., the foundation of His throne. Comp. Ps. LXXXIX. 15.

7, 8. The manifestation of His power is to the confusion of the heathen and the joy of His people.

8. Zion heard the glad tidings brought from Babylon.

daughters, i.e., the cities of Judah.

9. Rev. XVII. 14, Lord of lords, and King of kings.

the impotence of the heathen gods.

10. We must see to it that we are really on His side in the spiritual warfare which He wages. They

also shall overcome that are with Him, called and chosen.

12. *for a remembrance*, etc., literally, to His holy name. God's name is His memorial, which brings to remembrance all that He is and does. Accordingly this Psalm is used also on Trinity Sunday.

CHRISTMAS DAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 19. The revelation of God in nature and in conscience, which is perfected in the Incarnation.

PSALM 19 is composed of two separate hymns, (1) v. 1–6, in which the title God (El) is used, (2) v. 7–11, in which the LORD (Jahveh) is used. The first tells of the revelation of God's majesty in Nature, the work of His hands which reflects something of His power and wisdom (Rom. I. 20), and especially in the heavens.

The second tells of the revelation of God's moral beauty (as He is made know to His chosen people — this is the force of the title Jehovah, see Ex. III. 13–16) in the Law which He has given them.

These prepare the way for the crowning revelation of God in the Incarnation (see Heb. I. 1–3), when the Word of God is made flesh and dwells among us. John I. 1–14.

(1) v. 3. Literally as in R. V., Without speech their message goes forth. They have a language, but not one that can be classed with any of the dialects of earth.

4. St. Paul points to the universality of the proclamation of the Gospel — it is good tidings not only for the people of the Jews but for all peoples; in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth are

to be blessed — following the universality of the proclamation of God's glory in nature. Rom. x. 18.

5. The sun which goes through the heavens is a figure of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2), bringing light and warmth and joy, as it dispels darkness and chill and disease. Comp. Luke i. 78, 79.

(2) v. 7. More wonderful and more beneficent than the sun giving outward light is the Lord's revelation of His mind and will, quickening and educating man's moral nature.

The law stands primarily for the instruction given to Israel through Moses and the prophets, gradually making known God's great purposes and training the people to correspond therewith.

converting, i.e., restoring to its original integrity as made in God's image. The Word of God by Whom all things were made is the Light that lighteneth every man in reason and conscience; He in the fulness of time takes our nature to shew us how to use it, and to fight out our battles.

the simple are those who are ready to receive instruction.

8. Mark the appeal to man's own moral sense. God's law is not imposed by arbitrary authority from without. It commends itself to the best in us. II Cor. i. 13, iv. 2.

10. *honeycomb*, literally, the droppings of the honeycomb, i.e., the purest honey which drops naturally from the comb.

12. With all this affection for God's word, there is mingled awe and reverence; we see our failures to correspond with the pattern.

13. *presumptuous sins*, or perhaps *men*, who would seduce Israel to heathenism, and to the denial of God.

15. The redemption for which we look is from moral evil. So Matt. I. 21, I Peter I. 18, Tit. II. 11–14 and III. 4–7.

Psalm 45. The Ideal Messianic King

Written as a marriage ode for an Israelitish king with a foreign princess, perhaps for Solomon's marriage with the daughter of the king of Egypt (I Kings III), possibly on a later occasion. It is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ espousing the universal Church, gathered from all nations, as His bride. Eph. v. 25–27. Very likely all through the psalmist had a vision of a greater king, the Messiah, in whom all that was great and noble in the primary subject of his song should be more truly realized.

However much the language is *suggested* by a royal marriage on earth, and is applicable to such circumstances, the thought greatly *transcends* any such occasion.

Israel looked for the fulfilment of the promises made to the people, in the reign of a Righteous King, who should rule in truth and equity (Isa. XXXII. 1), who should fulfil the hopes that one Hebrew monarch after another, however fair the promise of his reign, had disappointed, whose kingdom, because it was a righteous kingdom, should endure for ever. Such a ruler would indeed be God's vicegerent. In and by such an one God would reign. He would be of the seed of David, and yet more glorious than

all his fellows, human yet above men. In him God and man would in some mysterious manner meet.

So prophets and psalmists uttered their hopes in words that went far beyond their own realization; they were carried beyond themselves. (II Pet. I. 21.) This perhaps the psalmist here realized; more than this he could hardly be expected to see. Accordingly the descriptions were seen before Christian times to belong to the Messiah.

v. 1, 2. Introduction.

is inditing, rather, bubbleth over with goodly words. The greatness of his subject has filled and stirred his heart.

I speak: my work (the poem) is for a king (befitting royalty).

3–10. The glory of the royal bridegroom.

3. *fairer than the children of men*, the choice and type of all, their true representative.

grace is not used in the technical theological sense, but rather for graciousness or persuasive eloquence. The gentleness and wisdom of the Word of God, speaking a word in season to him that is weary. Isa. L. 4, Luke IV. 22.

because. Such gifts are the proof of God's good will towards thee; or *therefore*, as in v. 8. Comp. the acceptance of Jesus at His Baptism, Matt. III. 17.

5. He is not only fair to behold, and gracious in speech, but he is mighty in battle, to uphold truth and to avenge the oppressed. Comp. Rev. XIX. 11.

because of, rather, in the cause of.

6. The conquest the Messianic king wins in this spiritual warfare is not by force or violence, but by the attraction of His moral beauty; the arrows are

His words, His teaching and example. Comp. the figure of the sword proceeding from the mouth of the Warrior in Rev. XIX. 15, 21.

7. *seat*, i.e., throne, as in Rev. IV. 2, 4, and in many psalms, e.g., XCVII. 2. Righteousness, the kingliest of all virtues, the necessary basis of an enduring throne.

The verse is very difficult. It may be translated, Thy throne (the king's) is the throne of God. (R. V.m.) It *means* that the theocratic king occupied the throne of God as His representative. So Matt. XXVIII. 18, I Cor. XV. 24 sq.

8. Mark the moral attributes. Comp. Isa. IX. 7. The Messianic king should reign in righteousness, and set up the kingdom of truth and purity and love. This is the true ground of Christian supremacy; thus is Christ seen to be above Buddha or Confucius.

9. The royal garments are so filled with perfumes that they seem to be nothing but perfumes.

"Out of ivory palaces [i.e., adorned with ivory] stringed instruments have made thee glad." R. V.

10. The magnificence of an oriental court. The other wives and concubines join in the procession.

11–16. The bride and her attendants.

12. omit "God."

worship in the old English sense, not necessarily of Divine adoration, "do him homage," Gen. XVIII. 12, I Pet. III. 6. The higher sense is true, of course, as referring to Christ.

13. *thee*, the bride. All shall do her homage as the king's bride.

14. description of the bride as she stands or sits

beside the king, at his right hand, in the inner apartments of the palace, the presence chamber; or, in her bridal array in the women's apartments, whence she is conducted in procession to the bridegroom. Tapestries of divers colors are spread as a carpet for her feet.

within, i.e., within the palace, not in the subjective sense of inner purity.

15. the companions or bridesmaids may represent in the antitype faithful souls, or national and local Churches in attendance on the Catholic Church.

17, 18. Anticipations and hopes as to the issue of the marriage.

The fruit of the Church's labor in spreading the gospel. Her representatives shall become the great leaders of mankind in all moral and spiritual progress.

18. *remember*, i.e., make to be remembered thy name (the king's). The conclusion of the Psalm corresponds with its introduction.

Psalm 85. The gracious return of God to His penitent people.

Psalm 85 was probably written shortly after the Return from the Captivity in Babylon.

1–3. The restoration of Israel from exile is a proof that God has forgiven His people, and taken them back into His favor. Jer. XXXIII. 7, 8.

1. *turned away*, i.e., brought back.

4–7. Yet the great hopes held out by the prophets have not been fulfilled. (Isa. XL–LXVI.) Only a remnant has returned, and they are an afflicted

and poor people. Accordingly a prayer is offered for a fresh manifestation of God's saving power. Comp. Zech. I. 12, Ps. CXXVI, 4.

8–13. There follows in answer God's assurance that His purposes of good for His people will be fulfilled.

8. Omit "concerning me."

saints, i.e., His consecrated people.

that they turn, etc. Rather, but let them not turn again to folly.

9. *glory*, i.e., the manifest presence of God. John I. 14, Rev. XXI. 3.

10. The thought (in itself true) that God's favor meets man's repentance and righteous dealing, is not the meaning here; but rather that different attributes of God are manifested, and that these are reflected in human virtues among His people.

God's loving kindness for Israel and His faithfulness to His promise combine in Israel's redemption. Human virtues will also flourish among God's restored people.

12. Material prosperity will go hand in hand with moral progress. Comp. Psalm LXVII. 6.

13. *before Him*, i.e., either Jahveh or the Messiah, His representative, and shall make His footsteps a way which His people may follow. (R. V.) The promises to Israel are to be realized in the reign of the Messiah, Israel's great Representative. And therein they have a progressive fulfilment. We are continually to pray, Thy kingdom come.

CHRISTMAS DAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 89. God's promises to David fulfilled, notwithstanding seeming failure.

PSALM 89, composed during the Exile, a prayer for the fulfilment of God's promises, which seem to have failed.

1–19. Praise of God's faithfulness.

3–4 quote God's promises to David's seed. II Sam. VII. 8–16.

8. *saints*, i.e., the angels who form the council of the great king; but He towers above them all in unapproachable majesty.

11. From the raging of the natural sea he passes to the uprising of men. Rev. XVII. 15. At the Red Sea both were miraculously subdued.

15. *habitation of thy seat*, i.e., foundation of thy throne. Comp. Ps. XCVII. 2 and XLV. 7, pp. 8, 14.

go before, i.e., make haste to stand before thee, thy glad attendants.

16. *can rejoice in thee*, rather, know the joyful sound, i.e., of the trumpets summoning to thy worship. Lev. XXIII. 24.

19. "To Jahveh belongeth our shield: to the Holy One of Israel our king." Therefore we may rely on God's protection of our king.

20-36. Poetical expansion of the promise in II Sam. VII.

These promises can only be fully realized in Christ.

20. *saints*, rather, saint, i.e., Nathan.

21–23. Christ's Temptation following upon His Baptism.

26. *the sea*, i.e., the Mediterranean, *the floods*, the Euphrates. Comp. Ps. LXXII. 8.

28. Comp. Ps. II. 7, p. 84.

37–44. The actual condition of things, in glaring contrast to these promises. So with the experience of the Christian Church.

42. *taken away the edge*, rather, turned the blade of his sword, so that he cannot stand his ground.

45–50. Pleading.

45. The psalmist prays that he may in his own lifetime see the restoration of God's favor to Israel.

50. *slandered*, rather, reproached.

Praised be. The doxology is an editorial addition at the end of the third book of the Psalter. Comp. XLI. 13 (the end of bk. I), and LXXII. 18, 19 (the end of bk. II), and CVI. 48 (the end of bk. IV).

Psalm 110. The Messianic King and Priest.

The psalm was probably composed in the time of the Maccabees, perhaps with immediate reference to Jonathan or Simon Maccabæus. See I Macc. IX. 30, X. 20, XIV. 35–41.

"David" in the Gospels (Mark XII. 36, etc.) may simply stand for the Psalter commonly called by his name. But the Psalm may belong to David's own time.

v. 1. *The oracle of Jahveh to my lord.* The psalmist sees his prince and leader raised to a seat of

dignity and power by God, with the promise of the subdual of all his enemies. Comp. Josh. x. 24. This of course is realized in more literal fashion at the Ascension of Christ, the true Messianic King, of whom and of whose ideal kingdom the psalmist may have caught glimpses, as foreshadowed by others in the more immediate prospect. I Cor. xv. 25.

2. (addressed to the prince.) The *sceptre* of thy authority. Jahveh will wield it on the king's behalf.

from Sion, the citadel and the capital of the kingdom, his power shall be extended.

3. Now the king is represented as going forth at the head of his armies, to do battle with the enemies, whose conquest has been promised. Rev. xix. 11–16.

"Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy muster." They gather round his standard, volunteering for his service.

in the beauty of holiness, i.e., clad in priestly robes. They consecrate themselves to fight the battle of God and of the right. The seer looked forward and saw the ideal king, who is himself both priest and king, and whose followers in the spiritual warfare are also kings and priests (Rev. i. 6, v. 10). Offering themselves, their souls and bodies, to God a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1), they are enabled as kings to rule over themselves in self-control, and over all external things, which they use for His glory, but by none of which they allow themselves to be enslaved (I Cor. vii. 31).

"Thou hast thy youth [young men] as dew from the womb of the morning." The young warriors gather round their leader numerous and glistening like dew-drops in the early morning.

4. The king is also priest, not by virtue of descent from Aaron, but by direct appointment of God, like Melchizedek, in whom royalty and priestly offices were united. Gen. XIV. 18, Heb. VII.

David and Solomon seem to have exercised priestly functions. Jonathan and Simon Maccabæus were also priests. In the ideal king all authority, both civil and religious, is concentrated.

5. God is seen at the prince's right hand in the conflict, upholding and strengthening him.

in his wrath, i.e., God's vengeance upon the heathen nations.

6. So Christ, the Author and Captain of our salvation (Heb. II. 10), in the Wilderness and on the Cross triumphed over the enemy (John XIV. 30, Col. II. 15, Gen. III. 15), and now enables us to trample under foot the enemy whom He has smitten to the ground.

7. In pursuit of his enemies the leader is refreshed and invigorated by a cool draught from the mountain torrent, and then presses on to complete his triumph. So Christ's followers in the conflict are refreshed by the stream of living water representing the Spirit, the Paraclete. John VII. 37–39, Rev. XXII. 1.

On Christmas Day we salute our Leader, the true Messianic King, for us men and for our salvation entering on His conflict.

Psalm 132. The sure promise to David.

Composed after the return from the Exile, probably in the time of Nehemiah, when the monarchy seemed to be lost, though the Temple had been re-

built. The psalmist prays for its revival, and for the fulfilment of the promises made to David, whose zeal for God's house he pleads. It was this which called forth the promises in II Sam. VII. Ps. LXXXIX was composed during the Exile; this after the Restoration; accordingly this is much more hopeful.

1–10. The prayer.

1. II Sam. VII. 2. *Remember* so as to recompense him.

2. David's thoughts are dramatically put into words, as in v. 6 are the people's. They share the king's enthusiasm.

6. *the same*, rather, *it*. The reference is not to the habitation, but to the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, which was at the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim. I Sam. VII. 1, I Chr. XIII. 5, 6.

Ephratah apparently is a name for the district of Kirjath-jearim, which means the city of the forests. (There *may* be a connection with Bethlehem, where the incarnate Son of God was born, which is also called Ephratah.)

7. The ark is conducted by the people, headed by David, to the sanctuary prepared for it in Sion.

8. When it is installed, God symbolically takes up His abode there. He is enthroned upon the cherubim which overshadow the ark, which is thus His footstool. So the sacred humanity of Christ is both the ark in which are enshrined the treasures of truth and grace, and the footstool of God on which, as it were, He rests.

9. Prayer follows for His blessing to rest on those who minister (the priests) and those who worship

(His consecrated people, comp. v. 17) in the holy city, and for the royal house.

10. *Turn not away*, i.e., Turn it not back, reject not his petitions. The prayer took coloring from the circumstances of this later time.

11–19. The answer to the prayer.

11. The sure promise to David (Acts XIII. 34) is nevertheless conditional (as are all God's promises) on His people's fulfilment of their part of the covenant. (Comp. the exhortation in the Baptismal office, "which promise He for His part will most surely keep and perform.") The accomplishment of the promise may be hindered and retarded by our unfaithfulness or disobedience. How sadly this has been the case with the Christian Church!

14. Sion, as the centre of the Jewish nation, will be in a sense God's abode, the place of His special manifestation (Rom. IX. 4, 5), until the Jewish Church is merged in the Christian Catholic Church, and the local Sion is transformed into the spiritual. John IV. 21, Heb. XII. 22, Gal. IV. 26. Then, still conditional upon our faithfulness, the promises here made shall be realized in better and more enduring fashion.

17. *the horn* shall sprout. Comp. Isa. XI. 1, from the hewn down stump a new shoot, the Branch, arises.

CIRCUMCISION AND NEW YEAR'S DAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 40. Obedience the true meaning of sacrifice.

THIS psalm consists of two parts, probably originally separate hymns.

A. 1–13. A thanksgiving for past deliverance, and the expression of this thanksgiving in self-oblation to do God's will.

B. 14–21. A prayer for further help.

Its appropriateness for use on New Year's day is at once apparent.

> "So long Thy power hath kept me,
> Sure it still will lead me on."

A. 1–7. A thanksgiving for past deliverance. The speaker may be an individual, like David, delivered from some great peril; or the collective people. The psalm may be said in the person of fallen humanity waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise, Gen. III. 15, and rejoicing in its accomplishment.

2. the rock on which his feet are set is contrasted with the pit in its height, with the miry clay in its solidity.

5. turned not aside after the example of the self-confident, nor to delusive idols.

6. *ordereth*, not prescribeth, but reckoneth them up. They are beyond our counting.

8-10. How shall gratitude for such mercies be expressed? In self-oblation. This is the true mean-

ing of all external offerings. They represent the self-oblation of the offerer. This self-oblation is perfectly realized in the incarnate Son of God. He comes to do God's will. He will be obedient even unto death (Phil. II. 8). His loving obedience is

> "the only offering perfect in God's eyes,
> the one, true, pure, immortal sacrifice."

See Heb. x. 4–10. With this self-oblation of Christ, the true man, we must associate ourselves, especially (1)as we shew His death in the Sacrament of His body and blood, offering ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to God; and (2) at the beginning of a New Year, when we commemorate in the Circumcision His obedience to the law.

8, 9. The Levitical sacrifices are enumerated, and distinguished first according to their *material* — animal and vegetable (meal-offering) — and then according to their *purpose* — for self-dedication (the burnt offering) or for reconciliation (the sin-offering).

8. *mine ears hast Thou opened*, to hear and to obey. This is the translation of the Hebrew. The Greek translation (followed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, x. 5) paraphrases this by "a body hast Thou prepared for me." As the ear is the instrument for receiving a divine command, so the body is the instrument for accomplishing it.

9. *I come*, presenting myself before Thee, ready to carry out Thy bidding.

10. In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me, i.e., in the Law (e.g., Deut. x. 12). Man's true ser-

vice is laid down and thus explained as consisting in true obedience.

11–13. The good news which he publicly proclaims is God's righteousness, which involves the certainty of the just moral government of the world. This has been illustrated in his own experience.

B. 14–17. A prayer for further help.

15. *my sins*, in their consequences.

18. *Fie upon thee!* etc. Aha, Aha!

19. rejoice in the rescue which thou dost accomplish. "Jahveh shall save" was the name given to Joshua (Num. XIII. 16), who was to be God's instrument for the deliverance of Israel. The name (given Him at the Circumcision) is realized in a higher sense in our spiritual Leader, who is Himself the incarnate Son. (Matt. I. 21, Luke II. 21.) (Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua.)

Psalm 90. God man's refuge in the shortness and uncertainty of life.

This psalm is sometimes called "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God," and is thought of as composed by him towards the end of the forty years sojourn in the Wilderness, when all the older generation, who had come out of Egypt, were dropping off. Amid this daily spectacle of mortality, the consequence of man's sin and God's displeasure, Moses looks up to the eternal God as the only refuge of His people, and prays Him to have compassion on them, and give them joy for the years during which they have suffered adversity. But the psalm is almost certainly of later origin than this, and probably belongs to the time of the Captivity.

Its appropriateness is obvious as we enter on a new year, as also its use in the Burial service.

v. 1. Amid all the vicissitudes of life, and in the passage to the altogether new experiences of the other world, God alone is our refuge and dwelling-place.

3. *come again*, either to dust, or in revival. The parallelism would require the former.

4. A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday to us as we look back upon it, or as a watch (a mere fragment) of the night.

7. Man is not only frail and short-lived, but sinful. Our sins aggravate the corruption of our nature, and add a terror to death. (I Cor. xv. 56.)

8. *secret* (sins). Our whole inner being is laid bare before Him. Rev. II. 18, Heb. IV. 12, 13.

10. the days of our age are three-score years and ten, or scarce four-score years; yea, even their strength (the prime of their years, or all in which they boast) is but vanity and a thing of nought.

11. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? And Thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto Thee? i.e., so as to fear Thee in due proportion.

12. *So*, i.e., in accordance with v. 11.

13. The prayer proper (following on the preceding meditation) for such a restoration of God's favor, as would gladden His people through the brief space of life.

16. *Thy work.* Manifest Thy power on their behalf.

Thy glory, i.e., Thy majesty shown in their deliverance.

17. *thy work of our hands*, all the undertakings of our life.

CIRCUMCISION

(EVENING)

Psalm 65. A thanksgiving for God's mercies.

A HYMN of praise intended to be sung at the presentation of the first-fruits at the Passover (Lev. XXIII. 10–14) in a year of exceptional promise, perhaps after the retreat of Sennacherib's army had left the people free to till their fields in peace. Isa. XXXVII. 30. "The fields so lately trampled beneath the feet of the invader seemed now, with their waving crops, to sing and shout for joy." (Perowne.)

1–4. God's grateful people gather in His house.

2. omit *the* before *prayer*. This is God's characteristic.

3. Notwithstanding our unworthiness we may draw near. He has promised forgiveness on true repentance. I John I. 9, II. 1. The Name given at the Circumcision is a pledge of this. Matt. I. 21.

5–8. In the future, as in the past, God will prove His faithfulness in caring for His people.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deut. XXXIII. 27. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Ex. XXXIII. 14.

9–14. The special object of the psalm — thanksgiving for the plentiful crops of the year. The verbs should be in the past tense; the special refer-

ence is not to God's general action, but to the present season. But we may well use them in the present, as we tell of God's goodness year after year. Acts XIV. 17.

10. The *river of God* is the rain with which He irrigates the land as out of a brimming aqueduct.

13. *dwellings*, rather, pastures of the uncultivated country.

So at the beginning of another civil year we are taught to praise God (as on Thanksgiving Day) for all the blessings of His bountiful Providence.

Psalm 103. A thanksgiving for God's mercies.

Probably belongs to the early time of the Return from the Captivity.

1–5. All our faculties are summoned to praise God for His manifold mercy.

3. These mercies are sealed to us in the sacred Name (Matt. I. 21) given to the Holy Child at the Circumcision.

6–10. God's revelation of Himself of old has been verified in the recent experience of His people. Ex. XXXIV. 6, 7.

11–14. His pardoning mercy knows no limits; His fatherly love shews the most tender consideration.

So we may review the past year and years.

15–18. Men may be frail and transitory, but God's servants can rest in the assurance of His faithfulness.

So we may go forward with glad thankfulness into another year with all its veiled possibilities of trial.

19–22. All creation is called to join in a universal chorus of praise. The mention of the angels, God's worshippers and messengers (Heb. 1. 14), makes the psalm specially appropriate for use on Michaelmas Day. They witness and wonder at God's dealing with frail men. Compare the Song of the Angels in Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, of which "Praise to the Holiest in the height" is a part.

EPIPHANY

(MORNING)

THE group of three psalms, 46, 47, 48, was probably composed as a great national thanksgiving after the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib (B.C. 701). II Kings XVIII, XIX. Comp. Pss. 75, 76.

They emphasize especially,

46 the greatness of the deliverance.

47 the praise of the Deliverer,

48 the glory of the city which had been delivered.

All may be understood by us of the better Sion, the Catholic Church of Christ. Gal. IV. 26 (which refers not to the future but to the spiritual Jerusalem), Heb. XII. 22.

Psalm 46. The triumph of the God of Israel over the nations; or The presence of God in the midst of His city and people as the ground of their confidence.

1. A help in trouble is He found very easily. When there were no succors to be expected, when neither king nor army could help the city, God intervened.

2, 3. Through whatever convulsions physical or social.

The raging waters are a frequent figure for the turbulence of nations. Rev. XVII. 15.

4. Read, There is a river the streams whereof

make glad. In contrast with the surging waves, the quiet stream like that springing from the Temple rock, which never failed in time of drought or siege; comp. John VII. 37–39, Rev. XXII. 1.

5. *right early.* Heb. "at the dawn of the morning." There is only a night of trouble.

7. Two titles: (1) The Lord of hosts, i.e., of the armies of heaven;

(2) The God of Israel, i.e., the God of the covenant. God is *with us*, Immanuel. Comp. Isa. VIII. 7–15.

8. As in the overthrow of the Assyrian army.

9. Comp. Isa. IX. 4, 5. All the accoutrements of the enemy are burnt up. Peace is gained through conquest, those that disturb peace being overcome. This overthrow of the power of His enemies is a prelude to the reign of peace which the Messiah will introduce. Mic. IV. 3.

10. To the heathen, Cease your vain endeavors.

To Israel, Cease your groundless anxieties.

Psalm 47. The universal sovereignty of the God of Israel, of which the recent defeat of the enemies of Sion is an illustration.

3. Israel is chosen among the nations as God's special people. But this is in order that in Abraham's seed all nations should be blessed. Israel holds in trust for others the gifts that God has bestowed, and in due time Israel is to expand into the Catholic Church. Matt. XXVIII. 19.

4. *the worship*, i.e., the glorious land where God is worshipped. Dan. XI. 16, 41.

5. *gone up* in triumph amidst the jubilant shouts

of His rescued people. God is thought of as "coming down" to visit His people, intervening on their behalf. Ex. III. 7, 8. So, His work ended, He is represented as "going up." The carrying of the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, to the Tabernacle, after it had led the people in battle, was in earlier days an emblem of this ascension. II Sam. VI. 15. Accordingly the psalm is used on Ascension Day, when our Lord having accomplished His redemptive work enters on His glory. Mark XVI. 19, Rev. III. 21.

9. The princes of the peoples are gathered together as a people of the God of Abraham: for the shields (i.e., the rulers) of the earth belong unto God; He is greatly exalted.

Jew and Gentile are gathered into the One Catholic Church of Christ, the Seed of Abraham. The kings of the nations bring into the city their riches. Isa. LX. 4 sq., Rev. XXI. 26.

Psalm 48. The glory of God's chosen city; or The safety of Sion, the result and proof of God's presence within her.

2. *The hill of Sion,* etc. — beautiful in elevation (R. V.), a graceful wave-like height with its beautifully rising terraces. See Lam. II. 15.

on the sides of the north. The reference may be to the sacred mount of the Assyrians, the abode of their gods, which was thought of as in the uttermost recesses of the north. See Isa. XIV. 13. The meaning would be that Sion is in reality all that the Assyrians claimed for their fabled mount of the gods. So "the great King" was a title claimed by the king

of Assyria, but Sion is the abode of One who is in truth so called.

3. Sennacherib's vassal kings gathered their forces.

4. The sight of the city overwhelmed them, and they were panic-stricken. Isa. XXXIII. 3.

6. God's might is irresistible. He shatters the stately ships of Tarshish in a sudden storm; with equal ease He annihilates the vast Assyrian army.

7. What we ourselves have witnessed corresponds with the tradition of our fathers.

8. *wait for*, rather, We have pondered over — as we rendered our thanks in the Temple.

9. Thou art true to the revelation given of Thyself.

Other nations rejoice along with Israel in the overthrow of the Assyrian tyrant's power.

10. the *daughters of Judah* are the country towns, as distinct from the royal city. Their inhabitants had fled, or had been confined within the walls during the siege; now they can freely walk about, and they are invited to make a circuit of the walls of Jerusalem, and rejoice in the safety of her palaces.

12. consider, rather than "set up."

13. He will guide us for ever and ever. (Probably the translation "unto death" is erroneous. It is national rather than individual protection which is contemplated.)

EPIPHANY

(EVENING)

Psalm 72. The glory of the Messianic reign.

CALLED in the title "A psalm for Solomon," and by many it has been understood as celebrating the greatness of his reign. But it probably is really of a later date, perhaps of the reign of Josiah; while commemorating Solomon's glory it prays that the diminished and impoverished kingdom of David may be restored to its former greatness.

The prayer, like the promises on which it is based, is only fully realized in Christ our Lord, in whom in spiritual fashion are fulfilled the hopes which the Jews cherished (largely with reference to a temporal dominion) of a descendant of David's line. See II Sam. VII. 12–16, Luke I. 32, 33.

1–7. A prayer for the king's rule over his own people, that God will make him the just ruler, under whom righteousness will lead to peace and prosperity. Heb. VII. 2.

1. *judgments*, i.e., decisions which the king would pronounce in God's name. I Kings III. 9. May these be in accordance with God's will: may the king's mind reflect the divine mind.

the king's son, not a second person, but the same, the king who is himself a king's son, the legitimate successor to the throne.

2. he is to rule in righteousness. This was the continual hope for the Messianic King. Isa. IX. 7, XXXII. 1.

It is only in obedience to the commandments of God and Christ (concerning justice and truth, purity and love), which are not arbitrarily laid down, but which mark out the path of our peace and welfare, that true happiness — domestic, social or national — can be attained.

4. the oppressed and defenceless are the special care of the king.

wrongdoer, i.e., oppressor.

5. *Thee*, i.e., God, whom the king represents. Comp. Ex. XIV. 31. Christ makes known the Father, and sets up God's Kingdom. He is God's vicegerent. I Cor. XV. 28.

6. *fleece of wool.* Rather, He shall be like the rain coming down upon the *meadow newly mown*, starting the new growth of the grass.

drops, showers.

7. i.e., for all time.

8–14. A prayer that distant nations may be won to do him homage and submit to his rule.

Here the future tenses should be optatives. May all nations submit to the best of rulers, recognizing the claim of moral supremacy.

8. from the Mediterranean on the West to the Red Sea on the East. Or perhaps it is a poetical expression meaning as far as land extends, from the River (Euphrates), the extreme boundary for a Jew on the East.

9. wild desert tribes *lick the dust*, as they prostrate themselves before him in submission.

10. *presents*, as tribute. The most remote and the most wealthy unite in homage to the righteous king, as with Solomon. I Kings x.

12. This is the ground of his claim, not might but right. Ps. XLV. 7, 8.

14. *dear*, i.e., precious. He will not suffer it to be shed with impunity.

15–17. Concluding triplet of prayer

(1) for the welfare of the king, 15,
(2) for the prosperity of his people, 16,
(3) for the perpetuation of his memory, 17.

15. *unto*, rather, *for* him. To the divine Messiah, the incarnate Son of God, we do pray with the Father and the Holy Spirit; but that is not the thought here; nor could it have been concerning any king the psalmist had primarily in view; he is recognized as the giver or channel of blessings. We pray for the extension of Christ's kingdom.

16. *the hills*, i.e., the terraces which cover the lofty slopes of Lebanon.

18, 19. A doxology not properly belonging to this particular psalm, but marking the close of the Second Book of the Psalter (42–72).

Psalm 117. The Gentiles called to praise the Lord.

1. An invitation to all nations to join in praising the God who has made Himself known to Israel. (Rom. IX. 4, 5.) The Jewish dispensation, in which special privileges were confined to one nation, was only preparatory. It was thus that a witness to the truth was to be maintained. In the fulness of time, so soon as the promises were fulfilled, the command

is, Go and make disciples of all the nations. Matt. XXVIII. 19.

2. The occasion of the psalm was some signal mercy vouchsafed to Israel (perhaps the restoration from the Captivity), which was evidence both of God's kindness to His people and of His faithfulness to His promise.

Psalm 135. The triumph of the God of Israel over the nations.

The psalm belongs to the time of the Return from the Exile. It has the scorn for heathen idolatry that Israel had learned in Babylon. It was probably intended for use in the worship of the second Temple. We use it on the Feast of the Epiphany, when we commemorate the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, and the gathering of both the Jews and Gentiles into the Catholic Church of Christ, the true Israel of God.

1–4. Those who minister in the Temple are bidden praise Jahveh who has chosen Israel for His special people. Ex. XIX. 5, 6, I Pet. II. 9.

5. He is the true God, shewing His supremacy in nature (6, 7) and in history (8–12).

11. Sihon and Og are representatives of the enemies whom the Israelites were enabled to overcome. Num. XXI, Deut. II, III.

13. What God had done, He will continue to do in protecting His people. He is ever the same, always true to His name and the revelation He has given of Himself. The name of God is His memorial. Ex. III. 13–15.

15–18. The gross idolatry of the heathen is reproduced in its folly by all who worship a creation of their own imagination, if not of their own hands, as distinct from the living God, Who has made Himself known in progressive revelations to His covenant people, culminating in the Incarnation of His Son. John I. 18, I Tim. VI. 15, 16, Heb. I. 1, 2.

19, 20. A call on all the covenant people to praise the God who has made Himself known to them — the Church, the priesthood, the ministry (in a wider sense), and "ye that fear the Lord," i.e., those who from among the Gentiles were drawn to the worship of the true God, like the centurion in the Gospel (Luke VII. 5), and the attendants on the Synagogue in the Acts (e.g., XIII. 16, 26, 43).

21. From Sion, His dwelling place, God's praise must ring out to all the world. The Church holds her revelation in trust for all. Matt. XXVIII. 19, Acts I. 8.

THE PURIFICATION

(MORNING)

Psalm 20. A prayer for God's blessing on the king dedicating himself in the sanctuary.

THE supplication of the people for their king as he goes forth to battle. Perhaps composed with reference to the Syro-Ammonitish war. II Sam. x. 6, XII. 26.

We say the psalm when Christ is presented in the Temple as our Leader and Representative; see especially v. 6.

A. The intercession of the people, 1–5.

1. The King is in the temple, offering sacrifice, the people pray that he may be accepted.

God of Jacob. He who, as Jacob's history shews, hears and answers prayers in the day of distress, hear thee. Gen. XXXV. 3, XLVIII. 15, 16.

2. *from the sanctuary* on Sion, where the prayers and sacrifices are offered, may help go forth for the king's battles.

4. *mind*, i.e., plans and counsel.

5. *we will rejoice*, i.e., that we may.

salvation, the king's safety and success from God.

set up, Rather, wave our banners in token of triumph.

B. The priest speaks (or possibly the king himself), assuring the people of the acceptance of their prayers, 6–8.

6. *his anointed.* His consecration was a pledge of God's assistance. Simeon, when the holy Child is presented in the Temple, as the first-born and representative of all, to do His Father's will and fight His brethren's battles, recognizes Him as the Christ (anointed one), who is to be a light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of Israel. Isa. XLIX. 6, Luke II. 25–32.

7. *Some,* as the Egyptians, Ex. XIV. 6, 7, the Ammonites, II Sam. X. 8, Sennacherib, II Kings XIX. 23.

but we, like David, I Sam. XVII. 45. The victory by David's greater Son was won not by worldly means or influence, but by moral power.

The anticipated result is regarded by faith as already achieved.

C. Concluding prayer of the whole congregation, 9.

9. Rather, Jahveh, save the king: and answer us when we call. Comp. Ps. 72.

Psalm 86. The dedication of God's servant.

A later composition, largely compiled from earlier psalms. We may regard it as the dedication of our Lord to the service of His Father.

A. A series of petitions, each followed by some reason which the psalmist pleads for the hearing of his prayer, 1–5:

his suffering, his place among God's covenant people, his trust (this the meaning of the word translated "holy"), his continual prayer, his devout aspiration, God's mercy. Ex. XXXIV. 6.

B. Renewed supplication to the one true God, 6–10.

8. I Cor. VIII. 5, 6. God is able as well as willing

to help, and every being on the face of the earth who receives help, receives it from the hand of Him who is the only God, and who shall one day be so recognized.

C. Prayers for divine guidance and deliverance, vows of thanksgiving, protestations of loyalty, 11–17.

11. "While he rejects every other way, every other rule of life, but the eternal rule of God's truth, he prays first that he may more clearly discern that way, and then that all the various desires, interests, passions that agitate the human heart, may have no hold upon him, compared with the one thing needful — to fear God's name." (Plumptre.)

Knit my heart. Literally, Unite, that it be no more divided and distracted, that I may be wholly Thine. Jer. xxxii. 39.

13. *nethermost hell*, i.e., Sheol, or the grave.

deliverance from imminent danger of death may be in the psalmist's mind, or the nation's deliverance from the exile, thus poetically described.

Psalm 87. Sion the birthplace of the nations.

Generally assigned to the time of Hezekiah. II Chron. xxxii. 23. "In its breadth of view and fulness of Messianic hope it vies with the grandest of prophetic utterances." Kirkpatrick. See Bp. Gibson, *Messages from the Old Testament*, xviii.

It depicts Sion as the metropolis of the universal kingdom of God, into which all nations are adopted as citizens.

1. "'Tis *His* foundation
On the holy mountains,"

i.e., Yonder glorious city, its magnificence is from God; the earthly Sion transfigured into a type of the universal Church, dowered with lofty promises.

more than all. Bethel and Shiloh have been neglected, the former holy places.

3. Egypt (Rahab) and Babylon, the recent oppressor, are named as the typical foes of God's people.

Comp. Isa. XIX. 24, "In that day Israel shall be the third with Egypt and Assyria." They whose king had said, I know not Jahveh, are now become His liegemen.

think upon, rather, mention.

with, i.e., among. (God speaks.)

4, 5. "Tyre and Babylon stand for the great world powers of Asia, and so Rahab and the Morians, or Egypt and Ethiopia, stand for the world powers of the dark continent of Africa."

This and that nation — so adverse to the Church of God — shall learn to look upon Sion as their true mother-city. Comp. Isa. XIX. 18–25, XLIV. 5.

7. Expressing the joy of the converted nations. Singing men, as in chorus, say, All my fountains are in thee, O city of God.

PURIFICATION

(EVENING)

Psalm 84. The Temple the true home of human life.

BELONGS to a time when the Temple was standing (1, 2) and apparently to the period of the monarchy (9).

Probably a pilgrim song in approaching the Temple for the great festivals. So might blessed Mary join in it when going to the Temple to present her first-born Son, or Simeon and Anna, in their constant attendance in the Temple courts.

So may we use it on occasions of the dedication of a church, or its commemoration, in preparation for Holy Communion, and in every rejoicing welcome of God's manifestation in grace and glory.

A. The Psalmist's delight in the house of God, and the happiness of those who find a home there, 1–4.

1. *amiable*, lovely and lovable.

2. the emotions, the reason and the will, with the bodily organism through which they act.

the living God. God Himself is the final object of desire in the Temple, and its services are only the means of realizing His presence.

3, 4. The happiness of those who find a home in the Temple.

3. birds the most worthless and the most restless: then too may I.

4. ministers who dwell in the Temple courts and are in constant attendance on its worship.

B. Blessed too are those who, in the strength of God surmounting every obstacle, press on to His presence, 5–8.

5. *thy ways*, the ways to Sion.

6. Passing through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs: yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings. R. V. m.

Baca, or balsam trees, which grow in dry places. Through some barren valley the pilgrims pass on their way to Jerusalem, but their devotion provides for them refreshment. Comp. Isa. xxxv. 7.

7. Instead of fainting on their toilsome journey, they gain strength as they advance.

8. This is their prayer as they enter the presence.

C. Their common prayer, 9–13.

9. *our defender* or shield (in apposition with thine anointed, the king) as the leader and embodiment of the people.

We may well pray for our acceptance in Christ:

> "Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
> And only look on us as found in Him."

10. *For.* Perhaps, Surely.

tents of ungodliness, the homes of the scoffers who had ridiculed the pilgrim on his way.

12. A *sun* for happy days, and a *shield* for dangerous times.

13. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to us; only let us draw near not in bodily presence only, and with outstretched hand, but with all the faculties of the heart lifted up to Him. James iv. 8.

Psalm 113. An anticipation of the Magnificat.

(See among Easter Psalms, p. 88.)

Psalm 134. Praise and benediction in the Temple.

The last of the Gradual Psalms. The pilgrim band has reached the House of God, and calls upon the priests assembled for the evening sacrifice (or for worship in the night, I Chron. IX. 33), to praise Jahveh in their name and in that of the people. We recite the psalm on the occasion of the blessed Mother's glad visit to the Temple with her Child, and with the thought of the devout worshippers in the courts of the Lord by whom they were welcomed. Luke II. 22, 25, 36.

This psalm was the appointed Introit for the Purification in 1549.

3. Lift up your hands *towards* the sanctuary, as the earthly dwelling place of Jahveh.

4. The priests respond with a benediction.

ANNUNCIATION

(MORNING)

Psalm 89. See Christmas Psalms, p. 16.

(EVENING)

Psalm 131. Lowliness accepted.

THE psalmist (whether David, or more probably a devout Israelite of the time of the Return from the Captivity) "has learned the spirit of child-like humility in the school of suffering." (Kirkpatrick.)

Appointed as the Introit for Lady-Day in 1549 Prayer Book.

1. *Not high-minded — no proud looks.* The first clause repudiates pride as it exists secretly in the heart; the second, as it shows itself in outward bearing.

2. *exercise myself*, busy myself. The ways of Thy Providence, the mysteries of Thy Grace. Ecclus III. 17–25.

He has schooled himself to renounce ambitious schemes which are impracticable, and to accept the rôle of insignificance.

3. Irregular desires, ambitious longings, appetite for knowledge too high for him, have all given place to rest in God. Like a weaned child, which has learned to submit entirely to its mother's will — growing into intelligent affection. Its content-

ment, in spite of the loss of what once seemed indispensable, is the point of the comparison.

4. In this spirit of resignation and contentment let Israel patiently wait for the development of God's purposes. Great hopes had been held out by the prophets; but the immediate prospect was dark and humiliating. Even so blessed Mary replied to the angel's message, — "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Psalm 132. See Christmas Psalms, p. 20.

Psalm 138. The joy of accepted vocation.

Evidently a psalm of the Return. The LXX title "of Zachariah and Haggai" would imply that it was used by them at the building or dedication of the second Temple.

A. Thanksgiving for God's loving mercy in the preservation and deliverance of His people, 1–3.

1. *before the gods* — the false gods of Babylon, from whom Israel had escaped.

2. Thou hast fulfilled Thy promise above all that Thy Name and Thy Word led us to expect.

B. This shall be told to all nations, and shall call forth their homage, 4–6.

4. In the seed of Abraham all nations are to be blessed. Gen. XXII. 18. Israel was put in trust with the revelation of God for the benefit of the whole world. Isa. XLIX. 6.

5. *in*, rather, of (the ways), His providential dealings with His people.

6. To the lowly He manifests Himself. Isa. LVIII. 15.

beholds afar off, i.e., He admits them to no fellowship.

So Mary sings — "He hath put down the mighty from their thrones: and exalted them of low degree." Luke 1. 52.

C. Trust in His continued protection and for the completion of His work, 7, 8.

This is exactly the spirit of the Blessed Virgin, surrendering herself to God's purpose, at the cost of whatever shame and sorrow might be involved.

ASH-WEDNESDAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 6. A prayer in affliction for mercy.

THE seven Penitential Psalms appointed for use on Ash-Wednesday (6, 32, 38 at Morning Prayer, 51 in the Penitential Office, 102, 130, 143 at Evening Prayer) have formed a special collection since at any rate the days of St. Augustine of Hippo (430), the great model penitent of the Church. When he lay dying he ordered the seven Penitential Psalms to be written out plainly and hung near his couch.

Ps. 6, The record of a personal experience, suffering from a direct divine visitation, of which persecution is a consequence and aggravation. "The psalm will be easily understood by any one who has passed sleepless nights in which temporal anxieties, dangers, or misfortunes have brought before him, as such things do, the reality and pressure of his personal sins. The psalmist sees that God is judging him; he prays that the judgment may be remedial and not merely penal; that God will not rebuke him in His indignation nor chasten him in His sore displeasure." (Liddon, Passiontide Sermons, p. 277.)

A. A cry of anguish for relief in suffering, 1–3.

1. deprecating the severity of God's visitation. Chastise with mercy. Jer. x. 24. In this psalm there is no explicit acknowledgement of sin, such as is prominent in Ps. 38, which begins with the same words.

2. *weak*, or withered away. "It is the picture of a wan face, thin and prematurely old, of a form like some flower pale and withered in the fierce sunshine of the wrath of God." (Abp. Alexander.)

heal me. So Jer. XVII. 14, "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise."

my bones, the framework of the body is racked and shaken.

3. *my soul*, the inner self as well as the outer organism.

These words were used by our Lord, John XII. 27.

B. Earnest yet calmer pleading for deliverance, 4–7.

4. *for thy mercy's sake.* Be true to thy declared character, Ex. XXXIV. 6, 7.

5. There will be no gain in his death. For the view of death common even among the Hebrews before Christ brought life and immortality to light, see especially Ps. LXXXVIII (Good Friday, p. 72).

the pit, i.e., Sheol, the abode of the departed, the Hebrew word corresponding with the Greek Hades.

"In this great underground meeting-place and abode of all the dead all was still and silent; there were shut out alike the light of the sun and the Light of God's Presence. Here no prayers were uttered; hence no praise would ascend to God; here man still lived; but it was a maimed and

imperfect and half-paralyzed life, in which all the higher energies of the soul had ceased to work."

We may apply the psalmist's prayer to spiritual death, and "the prison-house which even in this life may be tenanted by a fallen soul — a prison-house from which, humanly speaking, a perverse will, and the tyranny of habit, and repeated violations of the known Law of God, seem to forbid escape. Certainly, in this moral death, no man remembereth God; God is, for a soul thus dead, as though He did not exist." From this death we must indeed pray to be delivered. (Liddon, *ibid.*)

7. *beauty*, lit. eye, as an index of the general condition.

C. triumphant assurance of answered prayer and of restoration to God's favor, 8–10.

8. addressed to those who taunted him in his grief and suffering.

10. We may well use the words of spiritual foes, who not only taunt but tempt us. With God's help — His return in grace to His penitent servant — they shall be routed.

Psalm 32. The relief of penitent confession.

Ps. 32, Probably David's, referring like Ps. 51 to his sin with Bathsheba. While 51 expresses the first outburst of penitence, this belongs to a later stage, and recounts his experience for the warning and instruction of others. Comp. Prov. xxviii. 13, I John i. 8, 9.

1, 2. The blessedness of forgiveness, the condition for which on man's part is absolute sincerity.

Ps. 1 is the benediction of the upright, Ps. 32 of the penitent.

3, 4. Illustration of this in the psalmist's own experience.

5, 6. The way of restoration.

5. "He knows the three-fold misery of doing wrong. It is an offence against God, or 'transgression': it is an inward defilement or degradation, — 'sin': it is an 'iniquity' which clings to the soul, perhaps through life. Yet the transgression is lifted from the soul, as though it were an heavy load; the inward defilement or sin is covered; the iniquity, even though it be not entirely expelled while life lasts, is not imputed." (Liddon, Passiontide Sermons, p. 282.)

7. An exhortation, based upon experience.

For this, i.e., Therefore, on this account, let everyone.

in a time, etc. It may become too late, as with Esau. Heb. XII. 17.

Omit "*but.*"

When the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him (the penitent). The troubles of life, which overwhelm so many souls, shall not really come nigh the true penitent.

8. Addressed to God, appropriating the preceding promise.

songs of deliverance like Miriam's at the escape of Israel from Egypt (Ex. xv), and Deborah's after the deliverance from the power of Jabin (Judges v). Comp. Luke xv. 7, 10.

9, 10. God speaks.

The promise of Divine instruction and guidance

follows on the sincere confession of sin, for the acknowledgment of wrong-doing shews the desire for truth to which alone God's guidance is vouchsafed.

9. *with mine eye.* "A look is enough, as opposed to that bit and bridle which the mulish nature requires."

10. *lest they fall,* etc. Or, else will they not come near unto thee.

11, 12. Contrast between the lot of the ungodly and that of the faithful (penitent if not innocent).

Psalm 38. The lamentation of a penitent over his afflictions.

Suffering in mind and body, scorned by enemies and deserted by his friends, the psalmist turns for mercy and relief to God, acknowledging the deserved punishment of his sins. The psalm *may* belong to David's experience, when he had fully awakened to the enormity of his sin in the matter of Bathsheba, and when its consequences were manifested in the estrangement of friends and the revolt of foes. The psalm tells of "the storm which ever breaks, sooner or later, on kings and states, as well as on individual men, when the moral supports of human life have been shattered by wrong-doing." (Liddon, Passiontide Sermons, p. 289.) This psalm with its expression of utter misery is full of encouragement; (1) because God is shewn to have foreseen such experiences and to have provided for them. If we can sink lower than this description, this confession which God has provided for our use, we might despair; but not if we find

the psalm which He has given fitting our case. (2) The Psalm of penitence becomes a Psalm of the Passion. This cry of deepest humiliation is taken up by our Lord and realized in Him. He bears our griefs. Heb. II. 17, II Cor. v. 21, Isa. LIII. We are assured of His sympathy.

When the heart is sad within
With the thought of all its sin,
When the spirit shrinks with fear,
Jesu, Son of Mary, hear.
Thou the shame and grief hast known,
Though the sins were not Thine own
Thou hast deigned their load to bear,
Jesu, Son of Mary, hear.

The Psalm consists of three principal parts, each opening with an address to God, appealing to His mercy.

A. 1–8 describes bodily and mental sufferings;

B. 9–14 the desertion of friends and the threats of enemies;

C. 15–22 pleadings for deliverance.

A. 1. Comp. Ps. VI. 1. The emphasis is on *in Thy wrath*, as a judge rather than as a father. Comp. Jer. X. 24.

3. Comp. Isa. I. 6. His own sin is the cause of the divine indignation which inflicts the chastisement; he has brought it all on himself.

4. his sins are like a flood which overwhelms, like a burden that crushes him.

5. *wounds*, i.e., stripes. Comp. Isa. I. 6 and LIII. 5.

6. *mourning*, in mourning garb, as a prisoner appealing to the mercy of the court.

8. the inward moaning of his heart must find utterance in loud cries of distress.

B. 9. Thou knowest what I cannot express.

11. friends deserted, enemies plotted against him.

stand aloof from my plague, treating me like a leper.

12. They say, God has abandoned him.

14. *reproofs*, Rather, replies, in self-vindication. He commits his cause to God. Isa. LIII. 7, I Peter II. 23.

C. 16. Lest through his fate wicked men have an occasion of triumph.

20. In return for the good I have shewn *to them.*

22. Shew, we may pray, the virtue of Thy name of Saviour. *O bone Jesu, sis mihi Jesu.*

(PENITENTIAL OFFICE)

Psalm 51. A prayer of penitence.

Commonly attributed to David after he has been brought to a realization of the grievous nature of his great sin. II Sam. XII. But possibly written by some devout prophet of the time of the Exile (compare Isa. LXIII and LXIV), and put into the mouth of David; perhaps it was intended to illustrate in his case what should be the penitence of the nation for its unfaithfulness to God. In any case it is "written by inspiration of God to supply to all ages the most profound type of confession, and the most comforting assurance (based upon the experience of David) that God's mercy to the penitent knows no limit." (Kirkpatrick.)

The Psalm is in four stanzas:

A. 1–4. The penitent prays for pardon and cleansing, confessing the greatness of his sins.

> The ground, God's grace, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7;
> the condition, man's repentance.

B. 5–8. In self-abasement he contrasts the corruption of his nature with the sincerity which God requires, and expresses his confident assurance that God can and will cleanse and gladden him.

C. 9–12. Repeating his petition for pardon, he supplicates for inward renewal and for the continuance of God's favor and support.

D. 13–17. He resolves to employ his regained freedom in grateful service, and to express his thankfulness by the sacrifice of the heart, which God most of all desires.

Difficulties.

4. *Against thee only;* that is, in comparison with the offence against God, the injury to others, however grievous, sinks into insignificance.

that thou mightest be justified. I confess my guilt, so that Thou art vindicated as to the judgment Thou hast pronounced; my punishment is deserved.

7, 8. Are these future verbs (Wilt thou not?) or optatives?

14. *bloodguiltiness,* specially appropriate to David's crimes of adultery and murder; but applicable to all mortal sin.

Deliver me from the power and punishment of my sin.

18, 19. Are these a later addition? Probably

added after the Captivity, adapting the Psalm to the circumstances of Israel at the time, and to liturgical use.

It is a prayer of the congregation in exile, that Jerusalem may be rebuilt, and the sacrificial worship reëstablished, as a visible proof of the restoration of God's favor.

We must use the words in a figurative sense. Rom. XII. 1, Heb. XIII. 15.

In vv. 1 and 2 three words are used for man's wrong-doing:

transgression (offence) = rebellion against God;

iniquity (wickedness) = depravity of conduct;

sin = error, missing the mark in life.

And three words for God's pardon:

blot out (do away) = cancel and erase the record;

wash = inward cleansing;

cleanse = as from leprosy, in renewal.

6. *truth*, i.e., sincerity, whole-hearted devotion.

wisdom, spiritual discernment.

the inward parts, the impenetrable recesses of the human soul.

7. Comp. Isa. I. 18. The psalmist thinks of the inward and spiritual cleansing typified by the ceremonial cleansing of the leper and of others, in which hyssop was used as a sprinkler.

8. As the cleansing of the ceremonially unclean was the prelude to his restoration to the gladness of the worship of the sanctuary, so the inner cleansing leads to the restoration of joy in God's fellowship.

12. he desires to be upheld from falling by such

a divine inspiration as will move him spontaneously to think and do such things as are right. "With Thy free Spirit" should probably be "with a willing spirit" (on my part), a spirit eager to do right. Ex. xxxv. 5, 21. (Driver.)

15. *open my lips*, which had been sealed by sin.

16. *For*, gives the reason for the nature of the offering which he proposes to make — not a material sacrifice; in that God takes no pleasure.

17. *of God*, i.e., such as He desires and approves.

a broken heart, evidence of a deep sense of sin and of a tender conscience. The joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow for sin.

19. *sacrifices of righteousness*, those offered in a right spirit.

ASH-WEDNESDAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 102. A prayer for the restoration of the holy city now in ruins.

A PSALM of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." As Ps. 38 is the cry of fallen humanity, so Ps. 102 is the prayer of the desolate Church, God's covenant people, in penitence. The Psalm was probably written towards the end of the Captivity: Sion is in ruins, but the appointed time for Jehovah to have mercy on her is come. Comp. Jer. XVI, LI, Lam. III.

A. The extremity of his distress, 1–11.

4. *so that*, or "for." His loss of appetite may be either the cause or the effect of his misery.

5. *my bones*, etc. Rather, my bones cleave to my skin, — so emaciated is he, nought but skin and bones.

6. as in 3–5 the psalmist compared himself, or the people with whom he identified himself, to a sick man; so now to solitude-loving birds, which haunt desolate ruins.

8. his enemies mock him as one forsaken by God.

are sworn together against me. Rather swear or curse by me, use my name in formulas of execration, "make thee as —". Comp. Jer. XXIX. 22.

10. *cast me down*, or flung me away.

B. From his own misery he turns to the eternal sovereignty of Jahveh, 12–22.

12. *shalt endure*, art enthroned.

remembrance, or "memorial," God's name, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. What God has been, that He will be and will shew Himself.

14. Even the broken stones and scattered heaps of rubbish, which are all that remain of Sion, are dear to her children.

15. God's manifestation of His power and faithfulness towards His people will win the homage of all the nations.

So we plead in the Litany, O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for Thine honor — for Thy Name's sake.

C. He returns to the thought of Israel's frailty and transitoriness, with which he contrasts the stability and the eternal years of God, 23–28.

25–28, quoted in Heb. i. 10 as addressed to Christ and as a testimony to His supremacy. The psalm would at first appear to be addressed to the Creator. But (*a*) all things were created through the Word (John i. 3), and (*b*) the psalm itself contains the expression of hopes which were connected with the Messiah (13–17); so that the application of these latter words to Him as God's great representative would be less difficult for the Christian Jew.

Psalm 130. A humble and trustful cry to God for mercy.

Israel in the Captivity is suffering the punishment of its sins. The psalmist confesses that if the Lord should take strict account of these sins, the

case would be desperate. But the Lord has made Himself known as a merciful and pardoning God. Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. Therefore Israel can wait in confidence that the day of deliverance will come at last.

The psalm may have been written by Nehemiah. Comp. Neh. i. 4–11. What was originally a collective and national confession and hope, we may apply to ourselves personally.

A. A cry of penitence from the depths of trouble to the God of pardon, 1–4.

1. Note that the cry from the depths of misery with which the psalm opens leads to the full assurance of forgiveness and restoration. We are to lie low and look up; this is the attitude of penitence. A "Godly sorrow" will always be hopeful. II Cor. vii. 10.

3. *mark*, i.e., keep record of.

4. Were there no hope of forgiveness, there might be dread but not reverence. Despair would render men reckless. II Cor. ii. 7, 11.

B. Patient confidence in God's deliverance, 5–8.

6. more than watchmen look for the morning (in the sick room — or as sentinels on duty waiting to be relieved — or as the Levites for the dawn when the morning sacrifice shall be offered) my soul looketh for the Lord.

7. *plenteous.* He did not exhaust His mercy when He delivered Israel from Egypt; He will again deliver from Babylon. He calls and recalls and calls again.

8. He who possesses this infinite love and wisdom and power will deliver His people from all their

iniquities, and from the calamities which are the punishment of those iniquities.

Psalm 143. A prayer for mercy in great distress.

Probably a Psalm of the Exile, expressing the misery of God's people Israel under the oppression of their enemies; praying to God to deliver them, as He had done of old, and confident that He will hear their prayer. We may say it on behalf of *the Church* in her manifold afflictions and distresses; or for *ourselves* individually, oppressed by spiritual foes, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

1. The Church's prayer offered in Lent, from the heart, not only with the lips; pleading God's promise. I John I. 9, Ex. XXXIV. 5–7.

2. *enter not into judgment*, i.e., as an adversary, prosecuting a suit against me. Comp. CXXX. 3.

3. Having pleaded God's mercy and man's frailty, he now pleads the enemy's temptations.

darkness and *death*. Comp. Eph. II. 1, IV. 18.

4. "When the heart is sad within
With the thought of all its sin."

5 The days of innocence. Or of God's past dealings. Comp. XLIV. 1.

6. Godly sorrow. II Cor. VII. 11, Ps. LXIII. 2.

7. This second half of the Psalm (7–12) is mostly taken from earlier Psalms.

10. Teach me to do Thy will; no longer *my* own will and way.

Thy loving Spirit. Neh. IX. 20.

11. *Quicken*. Not only teach but enable me.

GOOD FRIDAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 22. The servant of God glorified through suffering.

THIS psalm should be read with Isa. LIII. In both psalm and prophecy the experience of God's servants is seen "fulfilled" in "the Servant of Jahveh."

The psalm consists of two parts:

The first (1–21) speaks of unrelieved suffering, borne with unwavering faith. In the middle of 21 the sufferer's prayer is heard, and the remainder of the psalm is triumphant praise. Both the suffering and the triumph are too great to be realized in any but the Messiah, though probably some immediate suffering (personal or national) was the occasion of the poem, which soon passed beyond the immediate subject to the contemplation of an ideal Sufferer.

Accordingly there is no trace in the psalm of confession of sin. His bitter enemies have nothing to reproach the sufferer with except his trust in God.

The title in the Hebrew, "On the hind of the morning" (though this probably refers to the *tune* to which the poem was to be sung) may be thought of as appropriate. The *hind* is the emblem of one persecuted to the death (Isa. XIII. 14); the *morning*

dawn tells of light breaking in suddenly on darkness (Isa. LVIII. 8). The combination gives an exact representation of the contents of the psalm. Comp. Gen. XLIX. 21, Napthali is as a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

A. Present needs, 1–21.

I. Plaintive expostulation, 1–10.

1. Not the cry of despair, but of the most perfect faith, "*My* God."

2. *take* in the sense of *find.*

3. *But,* not *And.*

Thou art holy, i.e., faithful.

O Thou that inhabitest (*or* art enthroned upon) the praises of Israel. The praises of Israel ascending like clouds of incense form as it were the throne upon which Jahveh sits. They are a perpetual memorial of His mighty acts in times past. Surely He cannot have ceased to give occasion for these praises. In virtue of His holiness He cannot be false to His covenant.

5. *confounded,* i.e., put to shame, disappointed.

6. *I,* the Servant of Jahveh. Isa. XLI–LIII.

8. Comp. Wisdom II. 17, 18.

II. Prayer for deliverance, 11–21.

12. Wanton bulls are circling round an unaccustomed object.

The sufferer is like a hind standing at bay.

13. *ramping,* i.e., ravening.

16. A fresh description of his foes. Like the troop of half savage dogs round the village, so a gang of miscreants have hemmed him in.

17. *pierce,* literally, bore through. The dogs fly at his hands and feet and maim them.

tell, i.e., count. He is reduced to a skeleton.

they, in satisfaction.

18. They are just waiting for his death to seize his clothing, and already speculate on what each shall take.

20. The soul is represented as an only child, and that a daughter. The sufferer is witnessing the torture inflicted on the soul as dear as an only daughter — like Abraham sacrificing his child, Gen. XXII. 2, or Jephthah, Judges XI. 34.

21. *the lion.* Comp. 2 Tim. IV. 17 (of a human persecutor), I Pet. v. 8 (of Satan).

unicorns, i.e., bisons, wild oxen.

B. Future hopes, 21–32.

III. Thanksgiving for answered prayer, 21–26.

22. Heb. II. 11, John XX. 17.

23, 24. This is what he says to the people. So Christ bids us contemplate His deliverance as a pledge of our own, if only we are faithful.

25. my *vows* made in trouble. Comp. Ps. CXVI. 13, LXVI. 12. Gratitude demands the most public proclamation of Jahveh's loving kindness.

26. Of the sacrificial feast, or thank offering made to celebrate his deliverance, all the godly and meek will partake. The offerer calls others to share in the feast upon the sacrifice. So the Lord Jesus bids us in the Eucharist to the sacrificial feast. I Cor. XI. 24–26, Levit. VII. 15.

IV. The extension of Jahveh's kingdom, 27–32.

"The psalmist passes from what is little less than an elaborate programme of the historical circumstances of the Crucifixion, to an announcement that by these unexampled sufferings the heathen

will be converted, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles will be brought to adore the true God." (Liddon, Bampton Lectures, p. 87.)

29. At this great feast they have found what all their wealth could not procure, and have confessed their indigence.

30. Yea, he could not keep alive his own soul — the description of each separate man in that vast multitude.

31. *seed*, a never failing succession of posterity. Comp. Isa. LIII. 16. It shall be told of Jahveh unto the next generation. From one generation to another the tradition of Jahveh's righteousness, of His faithfulness to His covenant, will be handed down.

32. Omit *the heavens*.

whom the LORD *hath made*. Rather, that Jahveh hath done it. I Cor. XI. 26. According to the Lord's command we continually tell in glad triumph and thanksgiving what He has accomplished by His suffering and death.

"We shew His death and confess His resurrection."

Psalm 40. Obedience the true meaning of Sacrifice.

(See Psalms for the Circumcision, p. 22.)

Psalm 54. The suffering servant of God protected and delivered.

The psalm in the title is assigned to David when the Ziphites were ready treacherously to deliver him to Saul. I Sam XXIII. 19.

It may be understood of our Lord betrayed by Judas to the Chief Priests, and by them handed over to the Gentiles.

We may say the psalm along with our Lord Jesus Christ, against our spiritual foes, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, relying on the victory that He has won in His own person and that He will reproduce in us. v. 7.

A. Prayer for help in imminent peril from godless enemies, 1–3.

1. *by* Thy Name and Strength. Shew what Thou art.

3. *tyrants*, i.e., oppressors. Violent men have sought my life.

B. Confidence in divine help, 4–5.

4. Comp. Ps. CXVIII. 7.

The meaning of Paraclete is one called to our side to aid.

5. *enemies*, literally watchers, who lie in ambush, waiting an occasion to destroy.

C. Vow of thanksgiving, 6–7.

6. offer a free-will offering of thanks. Num. XV. 3.

it, i.e., Thy Name (which declares Thy character) is good.

GOOD FRIDAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 69. The anguish of God's servant enduring unjust reproach.

WRITTEN by one in great trouble, suffering undeserved persecution. Though deeply conscious of sin, he is satisfied that it is his faithfulness to God which has brought his sorrows on him. The language and thought both point to Jeremiah as the *probable* author. (E.g., Jer. xv. 10 sq.)

The closing verses naturally belong to the Exile, or the time immediately preceding.

"It will give point and reality to the psalm, if we hear in it the voice of the martyr-prophet, to whom was assigned the bitter task of delivering God's message to a hardened and impenitent people, by whom it was received with indifference or open contempt. He, while divinely strengthened to deliver that message with unfailing courage, and inspired to look forward with unshaken faith to the rise of a nobler order out of the ruins of the old, yet in moments of human weakness almost lost his own personal trust in God, and became the prey of impatience and despair." (Kirkpatrick, p. 397.)

Here the antitype surpasses the type. While all the sufferings of the prophet are "fulfilled" in the Lord, no such failures or defects are found in Him.

Neither the confession of sin in v. 5, nor the imprecations of vengeance (23sq.) are applicable to Jesus Christ.

1–6. The psalmist entreats God to rescue him from the deadly foes that beset him.

1. he is like a drowning man, his calamities threaten to overwhelm him.

2. or like one floundering in a morass.

3. he is exhausted in mind and body by the prolonged strain of prayer unanswered.

4. The numbers and virulence of his foes, and the groundlessness of their hostility.

5. *simpleness*, i.e., foolishness.

Not, as Prayer Book Version, a protestation of innocence; but that God knows his faults and will deal mercifully.

6. If he is handed over to his enemies, others will despair of God's protection.

7–12. He urges that it is for God's sake he is being persecuted.

7–9. It is because of his witness to God's word, and his zeal for His honor, that the prophet suffers persecution, forsaking, ridicule.

12. the *gate* or market place, where men congregate. He is the talk of the city.

13–19. From the hardheartedness of men, he turns to the mercy of God, and repeats his cry for help.

13. *acceptable*, at the time Thou dost please, answer me.

16. *the pit*, either the grave, or a dungeon, such as Jeremiah had experienced. Jer. xxxviii.

19. Comp. Lam. iii. 57, 58.

20–22. he tells of the inhumanity of his persecutors.

20. *Thou* is emphatic.

22. Not content with refusing sympathy, they aggravated my troubles, and mocked me in my sufferings.

23–29. Goaded by the recollection of their behavior, he invokes upon them the judgment they deserve.

23. Let their own enjoyments turn to their ruin.

The second clause is literally, "Yea, when they are at peace, let it become a trap." In their security their fate overtakes them. The table was a piece of leather unrolled and spread upon the ground — which is thought of as curling up and catching the feasters.

24. make their loins continually to shake.

Let the eyes which gloated over another's misfortunes be blinded: let the limbs which are the seat of the strength they have abused be palsied.

26. *habitation*, encampment of tents.

28. Instead of taking away their iniquities by forgiveness, let one iniquity accumulate upon another, until they are crushed by the load.

29. *the book of life*, i.e., the roll of Thy people. (The *immediate* reference of course is to temporal not heavenly citizenship.)

30–37. Regaining calmness he looks forward with confidence to his deliverance, and to the restoration of his people.

31. God will be true to His character of faithfulness and justice as made known in His Name.

32. Any material and external thanksgiving is

only expressive and representative of the heart's thanksgiving.

33. God's deliverance of His servant shall be an encouragement to all His people. It will be a signal manifestation of His righteous dealing. So may Israel look for restoration. In like manner St. Paul urges the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as a motive for courage and hope. II Tim. II. 8–13, I Tim. VI. 11–16, comp. I Pet. I. 3, 21.

Psalm 88. The prayer of God's servant in utter desolation.

One continued and unrelieved complaint to God.

The psalmist speaks of himself as a victim of the painful and loathsome disease of leprosy from his childhood. Banished from society, shut out from the temple, life had been for him a living death, and with no expectation of a future life. Notwithstanding all this, he holds his faith in God, and continues to call upon Him. vv. 1 and 13.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

The psalm may well have been applied to Israel in Exile; and, as the expression of deepest woe, may be regarded as typical of Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows, though in Him the suffering was always relieved by the expectation of the victory to be gained thereby. Heb. XII. 2, Mark X. 34.

1–8. The psalmist appeals for a hearing, pleading the chastisements by which he has been brought to the verge of the grave.

1. Jahveh, the god of my salvation.

2. *hell*, i.e., Sheol. The gloomy nether world which is the abode of the departed.

4. *free*, i.e., cast off, adrift, like the slain in battle, whose corpses are flung into a nameless common grave.

out of remembrance, not only of men, but cast off from God.

Such was the common view of death before Christ brought life and immortality to light. II Tim. I. 10, Heb. II. 14–15.

Said on Good Friday evening the psalm should remind us not only of Christ's suffering, but of the change in the condition of the departed, and of our regard of it, effected by His death and descent into Hades. I Pet. III. 18–19.

7. *acquaintance*, rather, familiar friends. He is treated like a leper. Isa. LIII. 3.

9–12. He will soon be beyond the reach of God's love and care — in the grave.

13. As for me, while I am still living, in spite of all discouragement, I will not cease to pray.

15. Or divide differently, I have been ready to die from my youth up: Thy terrors have I borne till I am distracted.

17, 18. The flood of calamities threatens to engulf him, and there is none to stretch out a hand to help the drowning man.

18. *and hid*, etc. Or, my intimates are darkness. Wherever he looked there was only darkness.

EASTER EVEN

(MORNING)

Psalm 4. Joyous commendation to God when delivered from distress.

PSALMS 3 and 4 are ascribed with probability to the occasion of David's flight from Absalom, II Sam. xv–xviii, Psalm 3 being a morning and 4 an evening prayer. The latter accordingly is one of the psalms for Compline, the last of the daily Hours of Prayer.

In Psalm 4 immediate peril is past. David thanks God for His protecting care — protests his own innocence — addresses with indignation those that are in rebellion against him — and declares his perfect confidence in God. We see at once its application to the Lord's death and to His expectation of perfect vindication in His resurrection.

1. *God of my righteousness*, i.e., God of my righteous cause, Who knowest mine uprightness, Thou wilt assuredly uphold my right.

Thou hast. In former deliverances from great straits he recognizes the pledge of present help.

have mercy, i.e. be gracious.

2. Remonstrance with foes, who are in rebellion against God's appointment.

sons of men: Sirs, men of birth and station, but men after all.

mine honor, which is turned to shame, my high estate as the Lord's anointed.

vanity, i.e., baseless accusations.

3. God will guard His own.

4. *Be ye angry.* Rather, Stand in awe. Let wholesome fear deter you from persisting in this sinful course of action.

In the calm solitude of night listen to the voice within.

be still, desist from your mad endeavor.

Or possibly this verse may be addressed to his *friends* (II Sam. XIX. 5–7), who needed warning against presumption and fierceness. Then, "Be ye angry." So the LXX, followed by St. Paul, Eph. IV. 26.

5. In exile he and his friends could not offer the prescribed sacrifices, which their enemies would offer without right dispositions. (II Sam. XV. 7, John XVIII. 28, Isa. I. 11.)

6. *many* not only among his enemies, but among his discouraged adherents also.

7. Comp. Num. VI. *fin.* Though at a distance from the house and worship of God, and out of hearing of the priestly benediction, they were not shut out from the blessing itself.

8. *Thou* emphatic.

Notwithstanding the temporal prosperity of my enemies, Thou hast given to Thine own spiritual and enduring blessings.

"The boisterous mirth of harvest and vintage rejoicings is the highest form of joy which they know whose desires are limited to earthly things; but deeper far is that inward joy which is the gift of God — one of the fruits of His Spirit (Gal. v. 22)." (Kirkpatrick.)

9. *In peace will I lay me down and sleep at once*, no fears or anxieties delaying slumber.

Thou Lord only, or, It is Thou, Lord, Who makest me dwell apart in safety, — isolated from my foes in Thy safekeeping.

Psalm 16. Joyous confidence in the unfailing protection of God.

Psalms 16 and 17 would fit remarkably with David's experience when in the wilderness of Ziph, persecuted by Saul, driven out of the inheritance of the Lord, and in daily expectation of death. I Sam. XXVI. 19.

The Lord is his portion in this world and in the next.

1. *have I put my trust.* In Thee have I taken refuge.

2. *my goods*, etc. I have no good beyond Thee.

3. From God in heaven the psalmist turns to men on earth. The nobles in whose society he delights are not the wealthy and powerful, but the holy, God's chosen ones.

4. With these he contrasts the apostates; with them and their worship he will have nothing to do.

great trouble. I Tim. VI. 10.

5. *drink-offerings of blood.* Comp. Isa. LXVI. 3. Their libations are as detestable as if they were composed of blood.

their names, i.e., the names of their gods.

6. Jahveh, the covenant God of Israel, is the psalmist's portion.

My allotted portion of food and cup; all that he needs to satisfy hunger and thirst. Or, if *inheritance* be understood of land, comp. the blessing of Levi, Num. XVIII. 20.

Thou shalt maintain. Rom. VIII. 38, 39.

7. Jahveh is to him as the choicest possession in the goodly land. Isa. XXXV. 1, 2.

8. *warning* or counsel, to choose this good part.

Yea, that in the night season my reins have instructed me. In solitude and quiet God speaks through our inmost faculties.

9. at my right hand, as champion. Ps. CX. 5.

10. *glory*, i.e., soul.

My flesh also shall dwell in safety. Fellowship with God guarantees security as well as inward joy.

11. Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol:
Neither wilt Thou suffer Thy beloved one
to see the pit;

i.e., he shall not be surrendered to death and the unseen world.

12. Not only preserve me from death, but lead me onward in fellowship with Thee — which is true life. John XVII. 3.

in Thy right hand, as the Bestower.

For the psalmist the antithesis was not so much between life here and hereafter, as between life without God and life in fellowship with Him.

The words in v. 10 do not refer primarily to the rest of the body in the grave, in the hope of a joyful resurrection. *Flesh* does not stand for corpse, but for the outward living organism through which the heart and soul work.

But this living fellowship with God does make death and the grave, when they are experienced, of little account; so that the application of 10 and 11 to our Lord's body in the grave and His soul in Hades (as by St. Peter, Acts II. 25, and by St. Paul,

Acts XIII. 35) is quite legitimate, and so to our following of Him.

Psalm 17. A prayer and protestation of the godly.

1–5. An appeal for justice, based on the known character of Jahveh (2), and on the integrity of the sufferer (3, 4).

2. *my sentence*, i.e., the sentence on my behalf.
omit *and let*.

3. *night season*, when men's thoughts range unrestrainedly.

Not claiming to be absolutely free from sin in God's sight, but from all conscious love of sin; his will is on the side of holiness.

4. Or, Concerning men's ways, *I* have ruled *my* conduct by the teaching of Thy word, and so have shunned the paths of the violent.

5. Rather, My steps have held fast to Thy tracks:
my feet have not slipped.

6–9. The prayer resumed.

6. *I*, being such an one.

7. Make marvellous Thy loving kindnesses (i.e., show a signal intervention on my behalf), O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them that put their trust in Thee, from such as rise up against them.

8. *apple* (or pupil) *of the eye*, the emblem of that which is tenderest and dearest, and therefore guarded with the most jealous care.

9. exactly David's case, I Sam. XXIII. 26.
trouble, spoil.
soul, i.e., life.

10–12. description of his foes.

10. Their heart have they shut up. Self-indul-

gence has made them hard-hearted, and the presumption which is bred from prosperity.

11. Or, to cast *me* down to the ground.

> "Their eyes they order, every glance,
> To bow me to the ground." (Keble.)

13–15. protestation of trust in God's care for His own.

13. *disappoint*, rather, confront.

which is, etc., rather, by Thy sword, as in 14, by Thy hand.

14. from men of the world — whose portion is in this life — whose low desires Thou dost gratify. Phil. III. 19, Luke XVI. 25, XII. 19.

16. With the low desires of worldly men the psalmist contrasts his own spiritual aspirations. Their blessings are not to be compared with his.

after Thy likeness, etc., true, but not the meaning here.

Rather, Let me be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness, — beholding Thee face to face, as Moses (Num. XII. 8), in a waking vision, not merely in a dream.

As in Psalm 16, the psalmist is not anticipating death and resurrection from the grave; he prays to be delivered *from it*. Nevertheless we may well apply the words to deliverance *through* death (whether Christ's deliverance or our own), remembering that the reason and hope of this deliverance is the possession even now of eternal life, over which death has no real power. John XI. 25, 26, VI. 40, V. 24, I Tim. VI. 19.

EASTER EVEN

(EVENING)

Psalm 30. God's unfailing protection realized in experience.

A THANKSGIVING for a recovery from an almost fatal sickness. So considered appropriate for liturgical use at the dedication of the second Temple after the return from the Captivity (Ezra VI. 16), or at the feast of the Dedication instituted by Judas Maccabæus to commemorate its purification after the desecration of Antiochus Epiphanes. (I Macc. IV. 59. This is the meaning of the title in the Bible version.) The very existence of the nation had been at stake; it had been suddenly and unexpectedly freed from a crushing tyranny and restored to life.

So fitly used on Easter Even of our Lord's deliverance from the enemy, and of ours in Him. Heb. II. 10.

3. he was already as good as dead. Heb. XI. 19.

4. *for a remembrance*, or, to His holy Name, which is the memorial of what He is and does. Ex. III. 15.

5. *endureth*, comes to lodge.

6. Retrospective: he relates his experiences.

7. Presumption required the correction of chastisement. He did not recognize his continual dependence upon God for health and security.

9–11. the words of his prayer.

10. On the gloomy view of death before Christ brought life and immortality to light, see on Psalm LXXXVIII (Good Friday, p. 72).

12. his prayer is answered, his life prolonged.

13. R. V. To the end that my glory (i.e., my soul) may sing praise to Thee.

The Prayer Book Version "every good man" is true. All rejoice in this manifestation of God's mercy and power in His servant's recovery: still more in the resurrection of our Lord, with its promise for ourselves. I Cor. xv. 22.

Psalm 31. The faithful servant commending himself to God.

The psalm is in three divisions, which (so marked is their contrast in tone and language) may have been composed at different times. vv. 10–20 (which bear the impress of Jeremiah) may be a later interpolation adapting the original psalm to the prophet's circumstances.

A. Trust and prayer, based upon past experiences, 1–9.

The first few verses contain several expressions common in the Psalter.

1. The close of the *Te Deum.*

put to confusion, i.e., disappointed and confounded by finding that my trust was vain.

in Thy righteousness. To desert His servant would be inconsistent with Jahveh's righteous character.

3, 4. *Be . . . for Thou art*, i.e., Prove Thyself to be what I know Thou art.

Thy Name's sake. Shew Thyself all that Thou hast declared Thyself to be.

6. It is for the *preservation* of his life that the psalmist entrusts himself to God. Our Lord adapts the words to the commendation of the soul in death. Luke xxiii. 46.

In life and death we are under His protection. I Pet. iv. 19, Wisdom iii. 1. All live unto Him. Luke xx. 38.

redeemed, i.e., delivered from temporal and external, or from spiritual and internal evil and distress.

A double ground of confidence, (1) past experience (Thou hast), (2) God's known character (God of truth).

7. *lying vanities*, false gods, having no real existence, and deluding their worshippers; the exact opposite of God, Who *is*, and who constantly proves His faithfulness. I Cor. viii. 5, 6.

9. *large room*, or wide place, where I can move and act with freedom.

B. Urgent pleading in an extremity of need, 10–20.

The recollection of past mercies brings present sufferings into sharper relief.

12. *iniquity*. Some sin needing chastisement. But some read *affliction*.

13. Friends were afraid of incurring persecution themselves, if they shewed him sympathy.

14. As a dead man he is forgotten, flung aside like a broken vessel.

15. *blasphemy*, i.e., railing and defaming.

16. Men turn from him, but he turns to God.

17. *my times* — the vicissitudes of my life are all under Thy control.

19. While my prayers are answered, let my enemies be silenced.

C. Grateful celebration of God's goodness shown in the psalmist's deliverance, 21–27.

His prayer has been answered, the danger is past.

22. Thou wilt *Thyself* — not merely Thy external sanctuary — be their refuge. "Into *Thy* hands," v. 6.

24. *made haste.* Rather, As for me, in my alarm I said.

He confesses his want of faith in the hour of trial. Comp. Ps. CXVI. 10.

26, 27. Exhortation to God's servants to rejoice with him, and from God's dealings with him to gain courage. II Pet. II. 9.

EASTER DAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 2. The triumph of God's chosen King.

"A KING of Israel, recently placed upon the throne, and consecrated by the solemn rite of anointing to be Jehovah's representative in the government of His people, is menaced by a confederacy of subject nations, threatening to revolt and cast off their allegiance. The moment is critical: but his cause is Jehovah's; their endeavor is futile. He asserts his high claims; and the nations are exhorted to yield a willing submission, and avoid the destruction which awaits rebels against the authority of Jehovah." (Kirkpatrick.)

The king was very likely Solomon, with the great promise in II Sam. VII. 12, etc., recently given. The promise and the experience are realized in Jesus Christ. Acts IV. 25–28. He is manifested in the Resurrection as the chosen King, adopted as God's representative in the flesh, while really His Son in His eternal being. Rom. I. 4.

A. Astonishment at the tumult of the nations, mustering with the vain idea of revolt from their allegiance, 1–3.

1. *heathen.* Better, nations, the non-Israelitish peoples.

rage, or throng.

2. *kings of the earth,* in contrast to "My king," v. 6.

stand up, i.e., set themselves in array against. Comp. Goliath's defiance, I Sam. XVII. 10, 16.

3. The words of the rebels fretting like unruly oxen under the yoke and seeking to be freed from it.

As the faithful ever pray that His kingdom may come, so the men of the world are ever refusing His yoke and shaking off their allegiance.

B. The calm supremacy of the throne of God; the contempt of Heaven for man's presumptuous rebellion, 4–6.

4. *dwelleth*, i.e., is enthroned.

5. There is a limit to the Divine patience.

6. As *A* ends with the words of the rebels, so *B* with the words of Jahveh.

C. The anointed king himself now speaks, and declares the divine decree concerning his reign, 7–9. Comp. Ps. LXXXIX. 20.

7. *preach the law.* Rather, declare the decree. II Sam. VII. 12.

this day have I begotten thee. Israel was Jahveh's first-born. Ex. IV. 22. Israel's king, as the ruler and representative of the people, was regarded as God's adopted son. "The recognition of Christ's eternal sonship in the Resurrection corresponds to the recognition of the king's adoptive sonship in the rite of anointing." (Kirkpatrick.)

See Acts XIII. 33.

8. Inheritance is the natural right of sonship. Matt. XXVIII. 18, 19; comp. Ps. LXXII. 8.

9. the chastisement that awaits rebels.

Those who will not suffer Christ to make them vessels of honor, He will dash to pieces. His sceptre is either a shepherd's staff or a rod of iron.

D. Appeal to the rebels, 10–12. (The psalmist speaks.)

10. All rulers shall learn wisdom and gain stability from Him. Rev. XIX. 16.

12. *Kiss the son*, i.e., pay homage to Jahveh's representative. I Sam. X. 1, Hos. XIII. 2. But the reading (as well as the interpretation) is doubtful. Others, like the LXX, instead of "Kiss the son" read "Take warning."

lest He, i.e., Jahveh.

in the way. Their expedition leads only to ruin.

if His wrath is kindled, and suddenly (in a little) blaze forth — then blessed are they who trust in Him, and are safe.

Psalm 57. Trust vindicated in deliverance.

Attributed to David "in the cave" in his flight from Saul. I Sam. XXII. or XXIV. May have been written later to illustrate this episode in his fugitive life. "Calmness of trust rises to glad and triumphant confidence."

A. Prayer for protection, with confident anticipation of help, in the midst of imminent danger, 1–6.

1. *my soul trusteth in Thee.* Rather, in Thee hath my soul taken refuge — trusting not so much to the cave's protection as to God's. For Christ's example see I Pet. II. 23, and our duty, I Pet. IV. 19, V. 6–10.

6. Amidst all their violence and craft, assert Thyself, O God.

B. Confident in his prayer, he sees the destruction which his enemies had prepared for him falling upon themselves, 7–12.

vv. 8–12 are taken up in Psalm CVIII.

8. *fixed*, i.e., steadfastly resolved.

9. *glory*, i.e., soul.

lute, rather, psaltery, like a guitar.

awake right early, or, I will awake the dawn with my song.

10. Others shall hear of what Thou hast done, and shall join in praising Thee.

11. "Mercy and truth which reach from earth to heaven demand world-wide praise." (Kirkpatrick.)

12. So we would pray that He Who raised Christ from the dead would raise all from the death of trespasses and sins. Eph. I. 19–II. 7.

Psalm 111. Praise for God's fulfilment of His covenant.

One of the alphabetical psalms, the twenty-two lines beginning with letters of the Hebrew alphabet in regular order. Perhaps composed for Hezekiah's Passover, with the account of which in II Chron. XXX there are several points of contact.

So specially fitted for use at Easter and in connection with the Paschal Communion.

1. in the council of the upright.

2. For this reason.

sought out of, i.e., continually searched into by.

3, *a*. Full of grandeur and majesty is His working.

4, *a*. literally, He hath appointed a memorial for His wondrous works; the Passover, Ex. XII. 14, XIII. 9, the Eucharist, I Cor. XI. 24–26.

b. gracious and compassionate is Jahveh.

"O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given unto us."

5. As He made provision for Israel's wants in the wilderness by the Manna, so He provides for the wants of His people at all times.

6. *that he may give* — Rather, by giving.

the conquest of Canaan a pledge of the victories foretold in Ps. cx.

7. His commandments are not arbitrary, I John v. 3.

8. *done*, i.e., made, laid down.

9. The deliverance from Egypt and the ratification of the covenant at Mt. Sinai shadowed forth the greater redemption in Christ.

10. *beginning*, i.e., chief point. Prov. i. 7.

the praise of it. Rather, His praise, whose love and power the psalm has celebrated.

EASTER DAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 113. An anticipation of the Magnificat.

A. A call to the universal and unceasing praise of Jahveh, 1–3.

1. *The name of Jahveh* (repeated thrice) is more significant than Jahveh simply would be. "It is the compendious expression for His whole revelation of Himself, which is the object and ground of His servants' praise." (Kirkpatrick.)

2. His praise universal in time, 3. in space.

B. The ground of His praise, the condescension of the lofty One, 4–9.

5. Exalting still His holy place,
Low bending still His eye of grace,
In heaven above, in earth below. (Keble.)

All created things — the heavenly as the earthly — are infinitely removed from the uncreated Creator. Yet His mercy is over all His works, and not His mercy only, but His loving care. Tit. III. 4. See Isa. LVII. 15. The blessed Virgin is the figure of all meek souls, to whom Christ comes. In the Incarnation of the Eternal Word God has indeed visited and redeemed His people. John I. 14, Luke I. 68.

b. the *dust* an emblem of low estate (I Kings XVI. 2), the *dunghill* of deep distress (Lam. IV. 5).

7. Yea, angels tremble when they see
How changed is our humanity,
That flesh hath purged what flesh had stained,
And flesh, the flesh of God, hath reigned.
(Breviary hymn for the Ascension.)

Eph. II. 1–6.

Psalm 114. God the deliverer and protector of His people.

Psalms 113, 114 and 118 are the beginning and the end of the group of Psalms called the Great Hallel, sung at the Passover commemorating Israel's deliverance from Egypt. So they are fitted for use at the Christian Passover. This was the hymn sung by our Lord and the disciples before leaving the Upper Chamber after the institution of the Eucharist. Matt. XXVI. 30.

The restoration from Babylon makes the people revert to the Exodus from Egypt. The same Lord Who brought living waters out of the rock of Horeb (Ex. XVII. 6) and the cliff at Kadesh (Num. XX. 11) would now turn the desolation of Judea and Jerusalem into abundance. Isa. XLI. 18. Both the Exodus and the Return were figures of the redemption of mankind from bondage to sin and Satan — and exile from God — through the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It was then that Israel became the Lord's people, His special inheritance. Ex. XIX. 3–6.

The Christian Church has succeeded to these prerogatives with a deeper meaning. I Pet. II. 9, 10, Rev. V. 9, 10.

3. The beginning and the end of the journey. The astonishment of the forces of nature at God's presence. The parted sea, through which Israel walked as on dry ground; the rushing Jordan, arrested on its course; the granite cliffs of Sinai, shaken to their base; what means this wondrous spectacle?

7. *tremble*, as in birth-pangs. Ps. xxix, 8, Mic. iv. 10. The convulsions of nature which accompanied the Exodus were as the birth-throes of the Israelite people. But the deliverance from Babylon was the prelude to a far more wondrous birth, that of Him in whom human nature was to be regenerated; and He triumphed over death and Hades as the First-begotten among many brethren. Col. i. 18, comp. Matt. xxvii. 50–54.

8. Even so the hard heart of unbelief and ungodliness shall be turned into a heart of flesh, and caused to shed tears of penitence, by the preaching of Christ crucified and risen; and streams of living water flow from the throne of God and the Lamb for the cleansing and refreshment of the true Israel. Rev. xxii. 1, John vii. 37–39.

Psalm 118. Rejected of men but chosen of God.

This psalm undoubtedly belongs to the time of the Return from the Captivity; probably it was composed for the first observance of the feast of Tabernacles in the newly rebuilt Temple. See Neh. viii. The new temple rising in its beauty before the eyes of the psalmist would naturally have suggested the figure of v. 22. Israel rejected as a downtrodden and worthless race by the proud

nations which then aspired to build up the future of the Eastern world, had been visibly lifted by God into a place of honor. Israel was to be in some way — as yet it was not clear in what way — the corner-stone of the great temple of souls that God would build for the future of humanity. But the deeper Jewish commentators saw that the words (as those of Isa. LIII. concerning the servant of Jahveh) would really apply not to Israel as a whole, but to the expected One, the Messiah, Israel's great prototype and splendid representative. Accordingly our Lord Jesus Christ, when the people had at His entry into Jerusalem saluted Him in words taken from this psalm (v. 26, Mark XI. 9), applied to Himself what was said about the corner-stone (v. 22, Mark XII. 10, 11). Israel in rejecting Him was but repeating the crime of the old Gentiles in rejecting Israel. St. Peter before the Sanhedrin follows his Master's guidance in the use of the passage. (Acts IV. 11.)

It is a Resurrection Psalm (1) of Israel from captivity, (2) of Christ from the grave, (3) of the soul from sin and temptation, (4) of the Church from oppression and the Truth from denial.

A. All Israel, priests and people alike, are bidden to join in praising God for His loving kindness, 1–4.

4. *them that fear Jahveh*, the regular designation, common in the Acts, for converts from among the Gentiles won to the recognition and worship of the true God, the God of Israel. But some suppose that in the Psalms it is applied to Israel itself, or to an inner circle of true believers.

B. It is Jahveh alone who has been, and is, the

Strength and Deliverer of His people, amid the persistent attacks of their foes, 5–14.

Jahveh is the term used throughout, i.e., the true God made known to Israel. Ex. III. 13–15.

9. Such as Artaxerxes who had given Nehemiah letters to the Persian governors and an escort. Neh. II. 7–9, comp. Ezra VIII. 21–23.

11. encompassed me (the same word as before), Neh. VI. 16.

12. *like bees*, Deut. I. 44.

extinct as the fire. Ps. LVIII. 8, blazed up fiercely and then rapidly died down.

13. Comp. Micah VII. 8. How true as applied to our Lord in His Passion! Acts II. 22–24, IV. 27.

14. The words taken from the Song of Moses recall Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Ex. XV. 2, Isa. XII. 2. He Who helped then, is the Same today and for ever.

C. The rejoicing of the festival in gratitude to Jahveh for preserving the nation's life, 15–18.

18. II Cor. IV. 8, 9, xiii. 4. So of our Easter festival.

> Death and Life in wondrous strife
> Came to conflict sharp and sore;
> Life's Monarch, He that died, now dies no more.
>
> (Easter Sequence, *Victimae Paschali.*)

D. Sung in procession as they enter the Temple gates, 19–24.

20. A reply from within (to the call of 19), reminding of the conditions for entrance. Comp. XV. 1, Isa. XXVI. 2, Rev. XXII. 14.

22. *the head of the corner*, binding the walls to-

gether and completing the building. Zech. IV. 7, I Pet. II. 4–8.

24. to Jahveh alone we owe this day of national rejoicing. Isa. XXV. 9.

E. Vows and prayers, blessings and praises, 25–29.

25. *Save*, i.e., Hosanna.

Prayer that Jahveh will continue and carry forward the work which He has begun. Neh. I. 11.

26. The priests in the Temple bless the entering procession.

Applied to our Lord on Palm Sunday. "He that cometh" by this time had come to be a designation of the Messiah. Matt. XI. 3.

27. The people restored; they will offer sacrifices of thanksgiving. So will we with Alleluia and Eucharist celebrate the triumph of our Leader.

Easter triumph, Easter joy,
Sin alone can this destroy;
From sin's power do Thou set free
Souls new-born, O Lord, in Thee.

ASCENSION DAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 8. Man exalted in Christ. (See Advent Psalms, p. 3.)

Psalm 15. Moral dispositions required for admission to God's presence.

THE psalm may have been composed, like 24 (which see, p. 97), for the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to Sion. The characteristics required in one who would approach God are perfectly fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, who enters heaven as our Representative.

1. *dwell,* sojourn as a guest. Col. I. 12.

"Not merely ministers at the sanctuary or even worshippers are meant, but all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were often too prone to assume that God's presence among them was a guarantee of security, instead of recognizing that it demanded holiness on their part. (Mic. iii. 11)." (Kirkpatrick.) Comp. Heb. XII. 14.

2. Three characteristics:

(1) thorough conscientiousness, perfect integrity;

(2) conduct regulated by the will of God;

(3) inward truth (the language which he holds with himself is perfectly true).

3. no injury to others, especially through the tongue.

4. Rather

In whose eyes a base person is despised:
but he honoreth them that fear Jahveh.

He tries all by "standard scales." Isa. xxxii. 5.

5. Levit. v. 4.

6. Two of the most common and flagrant offences against justice — extortion (taking advantage of another's necessity to make gain for ourselves) and bribery.

7. *fall*, i.e., be moved. Such a man as has been described will not only be admitted to fellowship with Jahveh, but under His protection will enjoy unshaken prosperity.

Psalm 21. Triumphant return of the King.

A thanksgiving, corresponding with the supplication of Psalm 20 (see Psalms for Purification, p. 39), expressing the people's joy at the return of their king in triumph.

Its expressions go far beyond the immediate historical occasion, and point to the Messianic King. I Cor. xv. 25.

A. Addressed to Almighty God: a thanksgiving for the victory granted to the king, 1–7.

3. *prevent*, i.e., come to meet.

4. He asked life of Thee: and Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

Long life was regarded as a special blessing under the old covenant. However metaphorical for an earthly king, it is literally realized in the Messiah. Dan. vii. 13, 14.

5. *in thy salvation*, i.e., through the manifestation of Thy saving power.

6. *give him felicity*, literally, Thou shalt set him to be blessings, i.e., blessed himself, and a channel of blessings to others.

7. Comp. John XVII. 4, 5, Phil. II. 8, 9.

The grounds of this blessing — on the king's side, trust; on God's loving kindness.

B. Addressed to the King: anticipating future triumphs, 8–12.

8. Comp. Psalm CX. 5, 6, to be understood of spiritual foes.

9. i.e., consume them as fuel in a furnace.

Literally, in the time of Thy countenance, or presence. II Thess. I. 6–10.

10. *fruit*, i.e., offspring.

11. As with Joseph, Gen. XLV. 5–8, XLIX. 23, 24, comp. Ps. II. 2.

C. Concluding prayer, addressed to the Lord most high, 13.

God is glorified in the victory of His servant.

ASCENSION DAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 24. God's presence with His people manifested in triumph.

PROBABLY composed for the carrying of the Ark to Sion. II Sam. VI, I Chron. XV, XVI. The ark was the symbol of God's presence. He is thought of as a conqueror entering into and taking possession of the old stronghold, which is to become His special dwelling-place. The first part (1–6) is sung in procession on the way, the second (7–10) when they come to the citadel.

The ark after its many wanderings, through the forty years in the wilderness to Gilgal, then to Shiloh, in the land of the Philistines, to Kirjath-jearim (where it remained for nearly fifty years), to the house of Obed-edom, now finds its resting place on the hill of Sion, after more than four centuries.

So the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, the ark or shrine of the Godhead, after all the toil of His earthly life, is finally glorified at the right hand of God in the Ascension.

A. The majesty of Him who comes to take possession, 1, 2.

1. Though He has chosen one city for His special dwelling-place, His presence must not be thought of as limited thereto. He is Jahveh, the Creator of the universe.

2. It is *He* (and none other) who hath founded it over the seas; the contrast being between the stability of the land and the apparent insecurity of such a foundation. As Sion is raised high above the Jordan on the one side and the Mediterranean Sea on the other, so Israel is made to tower above the nations in religious privileges: what then ought Israel's character to be?

B. The condition of access to His sanctuary, 3–6.

3. Jahveh is not only Great but Good; His holiness corresponds with His majesty.

4. Four cardinal points of character are selected, two internal and two external:

cleanness of hands, i.e., perfect honesty in dealing;

purity of heart, the seat of feeling;

freedom from vain desires (lifting up the soul to what is worthless);

observance of oaths.

5. *righteousness.* The parallelism shews that righteousness is blessing in another aspect. We receive "grace for grace." John I. 16.

6. *generation,* i.e., class.

Jacob, i.e., O God of Jacob.

C. The ancient fortress is summoned to admit its true King, 7–10.

7. *everlasting,* or ancient. See II Sam. VI. 2.

8. The gates or their warders are represented as challenging the right to enter. Ex. XV. 2, 3.

Christ, the incarnate Son of God most high, ascends as worthy. He does not storm the heavens, but He enters by virtue of His conquest of the powers of evil. He is proclaimed as the Lion of

the tribe of Judah — the conqueror; but His conquest is through meekness and self-sacrifice, therefore He is seen as the Lamb that was slain. Rev. v. 5, 6. And He leads His people.

"When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,
Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

Psalm 47. Triumphant celebration of God's victory over the enemies of His people. (See Epiphany, p. 31.)

Psalm 108. Prayer of the covenant people for the realization of God's complete victory.

A composite psalm, vv. 1–5 from LVII. 8–12, 6–13 from LX. 5–12 (see among the Easter Psalms, p. 86).

The joyful parts of these two psalms, both originally composed under circumstances of great depression, are taken for this Thanksgiving for the restoration after the Captivity. The old words of promise and prayer with their historical associations were adapted to new needs. The people are still exposed to the attack of envious and malicious enemies (comp. Neh. IV), and God's aid was needed to maintain them in secure possession of the land.

So in our worship on Ascension Day we pray that our exalted Head will put forth His power to give His Church the victory over her spiritual enemies.

5. Comp. Matt. XXVIII. 18, 19, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth: go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."

6–13. Prayer for help, based on God's promise to give Israel supremacy over the nations.

7. *spoken in His holiness*, i.e., sworn by His holiness, assuring Israel of possession of the land.

I will rejoice, or exult. The words are to be understood as what God says, His promise, rather than as Israel's response to the promise. Comp. Isa. LXIII. 1–6. God claims the different nations, and apportions their land to His people.

Shechem on the West, Succoth on the East, both places at which Jacob halted on his return to Canaan. Gen. XXXIII. 17, 18.

8. Gilead and Manasseh on the East side of Jordan, Ephraim and Judah on the West, are representative large tribes. Ephraim is compared to the warrior's helmet, Judah to the royal sceptre.

9. Moab, Edom and Philistia, representative strong enemies, are reduced to servitude, and employed for the most menial purposes.

Moab is compared to the vessel brought to the conqueror returning from battle, to wash his feet: Edom is like the slave to whom the warrior flings his sandals, to carry or to clean them.

10–13. Confidence that God, who alone can help, will surely give His people the victory.

The utterance of the faithful, rejoicing in their Captain's triumph.

See Mark XVI. 19, 20, Num. XXIV. 18, 19.

11. Who but *Thou*, who seemed for the moment to have forsaken us?

WHITSUNDAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 48. The glory of the City of God. (See Epiphany Psalms, p. 32.)

Psalm 68. Triumph of the covenant people, rejoicing in God's presence in their midst.

THE Psalm may have been composed for the removal of the Ark by David to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-edom. 1 Chr. xv, xvi. But very likely it is of later date, with continual allusions to past events and reminiscences of earlier poems. Looking back on great deliverances in the past, from Egypt and from Babylon, the Psalmist prays for help in present need.

1–6. A prayer for deliverance, and an exhortation to Israel to prepare joyously to welcome the Deliverer.

From Sinai to Sion God's presence goes before His people. Instead of the outward tokens of the Pillar and the Cloud, the Christian Church has the indwelling presence of the Spirit of the Most High, the Spirit of truth and love and purity.

1. the chant with which the Ark set forward in the wilderness. Num. x. 35. So does the Christian Church go forth in every age to make war on wrong of every kind.

4. Cast up a high way for him that rideth through

the deserts — as pioneers for a royal progress. Comp. Isa. XL. 3.

After leading Israel through the sea on His chariots of salvation (Hab. III. 8), Jahveh advanced to Sinai, and thence to Canaan, "across the deserts."

5. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation;

from which He looks down on His struggling people. Comp. Isa. XXVI. 4, LVII. 15.

6. God setteth the solitary in families. Those who had been lonely outcasts He brings to a home of His own providing, and settles them there as His guests. What a thought this for the birthday of the Christian Church, whereinto as a new family and home are to be gathered disciples from all nations!

runagates, the refractory rebels who will not submit to their Father's gentle rule. "Only rebels abide in a scorched land." (Keble.)

7–18. Example of God's willingness and power to save. From Sinai to Sion.

8. yonder Sinai (omit "as"). Ex. XIX. 18, Judges v. 4, 5, Heb. XII. 18, sq.

9. making the promised land fertile. Showers of blessing are continually poured upon the Church by the presence of the Spirit of God. Ezek. XXXIV. 26, John VII. 37–39, Rev. XXII. 1.

10. *congregation*, or family.

therein, in the promised land to which God led His people.

10–14. "The victories of the period of the Judges. The stanza may be partly made up of fragments of ancient songs, and hence its obscurity." (Cheyne.)

11. *the word* of promise, on which victory followed immediately.

the tidings of victory are proclaimed by women singers, like Miriam and Deborah. Comp. I Sam. XVIII. 6, 7. These may well be understood by us of various national and local churches, telling of what conquests God has won. Col. I. 6.

13. Will ye lie among the sheepfolds? a quiet country life. Comp. Judges v. 16. Rather be up and doing, and pursue the fugitives. "The meaning of the next two lines is very uncertain. It has been supposed that the dove, with its plumage glittering in the sunshine, is a figure of the Israelites (Hos. VII. 11) basking in indolence and ease, while their brethren were fighting the battles of their country." (Driver *in loc.*)

As we recount the victories of the Church in the past, we are to press on the extension of Christ's kingdom in all lands, and in all departments of human life.

15–18. Jahveh's choice of Sion as His sanctuary.

16. Why look ye askance? The higher ranges might be thought of as despising Sion; yet that was God's chosen dwelling-place. Such may be the attitude of the kingdoms of the world, and of its philosophical systems, towards the Christian Church.

God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. I Cor. I. 26–29.

17. Jahveh is come from Sinai into the sanctuary; He takes possession of the citadel.

18. Jahveh is figured as a victor taking posses-

sion of the enemy's citadel, and with a train of captives following behind him.

led captivity captive. There is no idea of reversing conditions.

received gifts *from* men . . . *from* thine enemies — the tribute offered by the vanquished.

19–23. Jahveh is not poorer in resources than of old; He will again prove His might.

Blessed be Jahveh day by day: if one oppresseth us, God is our salvation. The Spirit of God is our continual Paraclete or Helper.

20. *by whom we escape death,* since He is the Life-giver.

22. *bring,* i.e., either bring my people again; or, bring back any of the foe who escape.

24–27. God is represented as making a royal progress. The description is either of a solemn festal procession, or an ideal scene of triumph in the future.

24. *in,* or into.

25. *are,* rather, in the midst *of* (the damsels). These form an outer line of attendants.

26. *from the ground,* etc. Rather, Ye that are of the fountain of Israel (sprung from Israel).

27. Zabulon and Nephthali, two large and powerful Northern tribes, "which constituted Judea and Galilee, the two orthodox provinces of the post-exile period." (Cheyne.)

28–31. Prayer for Jahveh to crown His work of old with a fresh revelation of His power. Then will kings and distant lands do Him homage.

"The psalmist in symbolical language refers to the rival dynasties of the Ptolemies and the Seleu-

cidæ, who with their greedy mercenaries contend for the possession of Canaan, to the sore disquieting of Israel." (Cheyne.)

28. The Holy Ghost, abiding in the Church throughout the ages, is ever ready to manifest His power, if it be called forth by prayer.

30. Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds — the crocodile or the hippopotamus, either a symbolic description of Egypt.

the multitude of the bulls, — the leaders of foreign nations, — with the calves of the peoples, i.e., the minor powers of heathenism with their subject populations.

every one submitting himself with pieces of silver, as tribute.

Scatter Thou the people that delight in war.

31. The different peoples, represented by the Jewish colonists from among them at Pentecost, come to be enrolled among the true People of God.

32–35. All nations are called on to join in praise to Israel's God.

34. Ascribe ye strength unto God;
His majesty is over Israel,
And His strength is in the skies.

35. Terrible is God out of thy sanctuary.

WHITSUNDAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 104. The glory of God mirrored in the world, as discerned by His spiritually enlightened people.

A HYMN in honor of God's goodness as shewn in the works of Creation, following the order of the days in the Genesis story. The Spirit of God is active in His creative work, giving life of varying kinds to all things. As "the Finger of the Most High" He delicately fashions the works of nature and of grace.

A tongue of praise is given to man with which to speak the language of gratitude to God for the whole creation.

1–4. First and second days. Creation of the light and of the firmament.

1. The works of God are as it were the clothing of Him who is Himself invisible. They reveal while they conceal Him. Rom. I. 20.

2. *light.* Nothing can serve better as the expression of God's nature. I John I. 5, I Tim. VI. 16.

a curtain, i.e., of a tent.

3. On the upper reservoir of the clouds God lays the foundations of His heavenly dwelling-place.

He comes forth in the storm to make His power known on earth.

4. Literally —

Who maketh His messengers out of winds:
His ministers out of flaming fire.

The winds and lightnings are His servants. The Prayer Book translation is an adaptation of the words, — His angels He endows with the swiftness of the wind, and with the power of fire. So the LXX and Heb. I. 7.

5–7. Third day. Separation of land and water.

5. Though it seems to hang upon nothing, *He* has established it.

6. The original condition of the earth while it lay in embryo beneath the waters. Gen. I. 9, II Pet. III. 5.

10–18. Further work of third day. Clothing of the earth with grass, herbs and trees.

11. the wild asses roam far from man, and have a remarkable power of tracking out water in the desert. Job. XXXIX. 5–8.

12. by the springs, where the trees would flourish. Comp. Rev. XXII. 2.

13. the mountains, which are beyond the reach of the springs, God waters with the rain.

15. Corn, wine and oil, the chief products of the vegetable kingdom. The countenance is made bright with oil from its increasing the nutritious quality of food, not by anointing the head.

16. The great trees of the forest, which grow without man's help, are full, i.e., satiated, with rain.

18. The thought of God's care for the lodging of His creatures leads from the trees to the heights of the mountains, where the wild animals find shelter.

conies, or rock-badgers, like Alpine marmots.

19–24. Fourth day. Sun and moon. (With which reference is made to the sixth day.)

19. Ecclus XLIII. 6.

20. *move*, i.e., creep forth from their shelter, and prowl abroad.

22, 23. When the day dawns the picture changes. Instead of the half-timid, half-savage prowling beasts, we have men laboring calmly and hopefully in the light of the sun. Wicked men, who choose darkness to hide their deeds, are like the wild beasts. Job XXIV. 13–17.

25, 26. Fifth day.

25. Yonder sea, great and wide-spreading — it is a world of moving creatures innumerable, both small and great.

26. *Leviathan*, the crocodile (Job XLI.), or any sea-monster, especially the whale.

29. All creatures depend upon God for life as well as food.

The breath or spirit of God is the source of life and breath of His creatures. To each order of creatures is life given by the Spirit of God according to its kind, in continually increasing degree, until of His fulness have we received, when Jesus breathes forth His Spirit upon us that we may live by that Spirit which made Him what He was.

30. Life not death rules in nature. A new generation takes the place of the old. Creation continues, for God is perpetually sending forth His Spirit and renewing the face of the earth with fresh life. So in the new Creation, the Christian Church, institutions, like Religious Orders, give way to one another, each fitted to its special time and

work; phases of spiritual life and thought succeed one another.

31–35. Concluding Prayer. This should all be in the optative mood: May the glory of Jahveh endure, etc.

The psalmist closes his review of the wonders of Creation with a prayer that the glory of God may be acknowledged by all, and that He who at the completion of His work pronounced it very good may still rejoice in it.

32. For if His works cease to give Him pleasure, He can blot them out in a moment. His mere look may cause the earth to tremble, a touch may set the mountains on fire.

35. May that which mars God's work be destroyed.

All creation is in harmony as it is ruled by the Spirit of God.

To violate this order is to ensure corruption and ruin. Comp. I Cor. III. 16, 17.

Psalm 145. The glory of the Divine Character recognized and sung in the Church.

This whole group of Psalms (145–150) was perhaps written for the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. Comp. 147, v. 13.

This is the only Psalm entitled "A Praise," from which the Hebrew title of the whole Psalter ("Praises") is derived.

Alphabetical in form, each verse beginning with a letter of the alphabet in regular order. The verse beginning with N is wanting between 13 and 14. This verse is found in the LXX, but its genuineness is

disputed. It is the verse incorporated into the Song of the Angelicals in the *Dream of Gerontius*, "Faithful is the Lord in all His words, and holy in all His works."

The most striking characteristic of the Psalm is its universalism. If Israel begins the chorus of praise (1), it will not be content until all mankind join in it (21). Jahveh's goodness embraces all His creation, and the whole of creation responds with its hymn of praise. (Kirkpatrick.)

So is the Psalm appropriate for the birthday of the Catholic Church, when representatives from among all nations are gathered together to hear and tell the wonderful works of God. Acts II. 5–11.

1–4. *The song of Israel, the chosen nation.* As one generation passes away, another takes up the strain, to hand it on in turn to its successor. The Church is Catholic because lasting through all ages, as well as because embracing all nations.

3. *marvellous*, an adverb connected with "worthy." Comp. XXXI. 23.

4. *works*, specially in the deliverance and restoration of His people from the Captivity.

5. This shall be my theme.

worship, i.e., honor.

7. That is, the memory shall be recalled. The Eucharist is the great Christian *memorial* of God's goodness. I Cor. XI. 26.

8. Ex. XXXIV. 5–7, "Jahveh's great revelation of Himself as a God of condescending grace and infinite compassion, Whose will is love, and Whose wrath is only manifested in the last resort against the hardened and impenitent." (Kirkpatrick.)

9. to *all*, not merely "to every man."

10. All God's creatures responding to His goodness, but especially His intelligent servants and His chosen people.

14. As in the Captivity. All this is true for us in a fuller and more spiritual sense. Comp. Matt. xi. 28–30.

15, 16. Comp. civ. 27, 28.

18. i.e., to answer and help. Comp. James iv. 8. This is especially true of the Holy Spirit as our unfailing and indwelling Helper. John xiv. 16.

19, 20. "Fear and love are the inseparable elements of true religion. Fear preserves love from degenerating into presumptuous familiarity: love prevents fear from becoming a servile and cringing dread." (Kirkpatrick.)

20. Comp. Isa. xi. 4.

TRINITY SUNDAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 29. The adoration of God by His covenant people, the ground of their peace.

1. Jahveh should be read throughout the Psalm.
mighty, literally, sons of God, i.e., angels.

2. in holy array.

3. A storm is seen approaching from the Mediterranean. It sweeps across northern Palestine to the mountains of Lebanon with their forests of cedar, and then southward to Kadesh.

6. *Sirion*, the Sidonian name for Hermon.

7. lightnings flash and thunders peal and roar.

8. strippeth the forests bare.
in His temple (which includes all nature) everything cries Glory.

9. *sitteth*, i.e., is enthroned. Above the storm, as at the Flood of old and ever since, Jahveh sits enthroned, giving to His people who look to Him both strength and peace.

Psalm 33. Adoration of God by His covenant people in joyous thanksgiving.

1–3. Introductory call to praise.
We join in the praise of Jahveh (1) for His character, thrice-holy, His power, wisdom and love all in perfect harmony — His almighty power being ever exercised according to infinite wisdom and in

perfect love; and (2) for what He has done and does for us, as our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier.

4–11. The grounds of praise.

(*a*) His moral attributes, 4, 5;

(*b*) His creative omnipotence, 6–9;

(*c*) His sovereignty in the world, 10, 11.

12–18. Specially from His chosen people. Deut. XXXIII. 29.

15. The delusiveness of material resources is contrasted with Jahveh's care for His people. Ex. XIV. 17, I Macc. III. 19.

16. To the Israelites cavalry seemed the *most* formidable part of an army.

17. Not only the body by federal choice, but its members by their correspondence with the moral characteristics required in God's people.

18. violent death by war or pestilence.

19–21. The people's concluding profession of patient trust and hope, corresponding to the introductory invitation of 1–3, and springing naturally out of the consideration of Jahveh's character in 12–18.

20. *His holy name.* His Name is that which brings to remembrance all that He is and does. Ex. III. 15.

We know Him not only as the Self-Existent One, the Sovereign and Righteous Ruler, the God of our fathers, but as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, yet with inner distinctions of being which tell of an eternal life of love, into which we are admitted, being made children of our heavenly Father, as members of His incarnate Son, and partakers of His indwelling Spirit.

21. The end of the *Te Deum.*

TRINITY SUNDAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 93. Adoration of the Divine sovereignty.

THE first of a series of Psalms which celebrate the coming forth of Jahveh and the manifestation of His majesty, primarily in the deliverance of His people from the Captivity. This an anticipation of His manifestation of Himself as King of the whole earth. Rev. XI. 15–17, XIX. 6.

1. *apparel.* Comp. Isa. LIX. 17, LXIII. 1. He has assumed the royal insignia, arms not only splendid but strong.

2. Therefore the order of things is secure. The anarchy which seems to prevail in the world is not real; He exercises firm control over the most turbulent elements.

"By Jehovah's assumption of sovereignty, the agitated world of civil societies is awed into peace (comp. LXXV. 3). The reference is not to the physical globe (the 'round world')." (Driver.)

4. The sea, as in Rev. XVII. 15, XXI. 1, is a figure of the tumultuous passions of men.

More glorious than the voices of many waters, than the glorious breakers of the sea, is Jahveh, enthroned on high.

5. *dwelleth,* i.e., is enthroned.

6. The reflection of the psalmist contemplating

the glorious and universal kingdom which God would one day take to Himself. His revelation of Himself, including His promises, is altogether true and faithful.

Psalm 97. Adoration of God as the righteous judge.
(See Advent Psalms, p. 8.)

Psalm 150. The triumphant worship of the covenant God.

The final doxology to the whole Psalter. Comp. 41, v. 13; 72, v. 18, 19; 89, v. 50; 106, v. 46 for doxologies at the end of the other books. So all the prayers of the Church on earth shall melt into the praise and worship of the Church in heaven.

1. Marks the *place* of praise, *in* His sanctuary, where His might and majesty are displayed.

2. the *matter* of praise, *for* His noble acts. In the recital of these, as the Exodus, the Restoration from Babylon, and the ultimate deliverance of His people of which these were but types. Rev. v, vii, xix.

3–5. the *mode or instrument* of praise, *with* the trumpet, etc.

4. the timbrel or tambourine was the chief instrumental accompaniment of the dance. Ex. xv. 20.

5. cymbals of clear sound and of loud sound, the former intended to accompany the voice, the latter such as are used to clash in military bands.

6. the *offerer* of praise, the whole of breath, i.e., all living beings. In this great concert for the marriage feast of the Lamb all the modes of pro-

ducing musical tunes are named, breath for the trumpet and pipe, vibration of strings in psaltery and harp, blows for the beating of drums and clash of cymbals. Music of every kind, from all ranks and conditions, drawn out by all sorts of experience.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

(MORNING)

Psalm 27. Seeking the face of Jahveh.

"THE psalm, or at any rate the first part, has strong claims to be regarded as Davidic, and may best be assigned to the time of Absalom's rebellion, shortly before the final battle." (Kirkpatrick.)

The drawing near of God, with the proclamation of His Son, in answer to the drawing near to Him in vigil and prayer on the mount of Transfiguration, may well be regarded as a signal illustration of the spiritual experience described in the Psalm. Luke IX. 28, James IV. 8.

1. *Strength*, i.e., stronghold, as a place of refuge. Compare the manifestation of the "goodness" of Jahveh, Ex. XXXIII. 19, sq. one of the O. T. lessons for the Transfiguration. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," from that chapter, might serve as an antiphon to this Psalm.

2. The psalmist compares his assailants to wild beasts, eager to devour him. Comp. XXII. 12, 16.

4. *require*, rather, seek after. Not in the sense of demanding from God, but of earnest endeavor on our part to reach.

The material temple, into which the worshipper may continually enter, is a figure of the spiritual

presence of God, in which the faithful soul should constantly abide.

5. Isa. IV. 6, XXV. 4, Romans VIII. 31–39. "He will be secured from danger as one who is sheltered from heat and storm, or safe from assault, in some inaccessible rock-fortress." (Kirkpatrick.)

6. Not protection only will the Lord give, but triumphant victory.

7. Sacrifices of thanksgiving shall celebrate his deliverance. Lev. VII. 11, Num. X. 10, II Sam. VI. 15.

With 8 apparently begins a distinct hymn, less confident in tone, the plaintive cry of a priest or prophet in exile, as the former (1–7) may be the prayer of a warrior on the battle-field.

"It is as though the later psalmist would say — 'I would fain appropriate this bold utterance of faith; but all is dark around me, and I can only pray in faltering tones, and strive to wait in patience.'" (Kirkpatrick.) We might perhaps venture to regard this as the utterance of our Lord's heart, on the other great occasion when He took the same three disciples who had been with Him on the mount, to be with Him in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is still confident, though exceeding sorrowful. Mk. XIV. 33.

9. Rather, When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

10. following close on 9.

13. *enemies* who lie in ambush. There are many who would beguile us from the narrow path. Therefore we pray, Do Thou continually guide me; may Thy fatherly hand be *over* me to protect and guard,

and Thy Holy Spirit *within* me to inspire and guide. Isa. xxx. 21.

14. Depicts the adversaries as aggressive rather than as seductive.

speak wrong, i.e., breathe out cruelty, bent on injuring by their calumnies.

15. *in the land of the living.* For the psalmist this would probably mean, before passing into the land of shades; for us, it may look forward to a future world where true life is realized, after "the disquietude of this world."

16. Be not impatient. The vision of which a foretaste was vouchsafed on the mount shall have its full realization.

Psalm 61. God's manifested presence the refuge of the soul.

The psalmist is exiled from the temple, but looking forward to his return; perhaps David at the time of Absalom's rebellion (II Sam. xv. 25); perhaps when the Captivity began.

1–4. A cry of prayer.

2. Jerusalem, the dwelling-place of God, is for the psalmist the centre of the earth.

3. *the rock*, a place of security which is too high for him to climb unaided. God Himself will be such a rock of refuge to the faithful.

4. *I will*, rather, I would, or Let me sojourn.

thy wings, the figure perhaps suggested by the cherubim with their wings outspread over the mercy-seat.

In his banishment he prays that he may once more be received as Jahveh's guest, to enjoy His

protection and hospitality, to dwell in the place which He has consecrated by His presence. (Kirkpatrick.) The yearning of the sacred humanity of our Lord to be admitted to the glory which had been His before the world began. John XVII. 5. As man He draws near to His Father in prayer on the mount. Luke IX. 28.

5–8. Expression of faith. Such prayers he can offer in confidence, for his prayers have already been partially answered.

6. Moses and Elijah spake on the mount of our Lord's "decease which He should accomplish" (Lk. IX. 31), the greater exodus in which He would lead His people forth from bondage to true life and freedom. "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

7. He shall sit enthroned before God for ever — an allusion to the promise of eternal dominion to the house of David (II Sam. VII. 16), realized in our Lord manifested on the mount as the fulfilment of the Law and of the Prophets.

Psalm 93. The manifestation of the Lord's majesty.
(See Trinity Sunday, p. 114)

THE TRANSFIGURATION

(EVENING)

Psalm 84. God's manifested presence transfiguring the life of man. (See Purification, p. 43.)

Psalm 99. God's triumphant glory manifested among His faithful servants.

"A CALL to all nations, and especially to His own people, to worship Jahveh as the thrice-holy God. The unceasing adoration which is evoked in heaven by the contemplation of the absolute moral perfection of God (Isa. VI. 3) should find an echo upon earth." (Kirkpatrick.)

(*a*) The universal sovereignty of Jahveh who has established His rule in Sion (1–3),

(*b*) The righteous character of His rule in Israel (4, 5),

(*c*) His faithfulness in His dealings with His people manifested in their history (6–9)

are successively celebrated, each stanza ending with a call to worship and extol Him as the Holy God.

1. *sitteth between* (or *upon*) *the cherubim.* The idea is two-fold, (1) of the exaltation of God above all the heavenly beings, (2) of His presence with His covenant people on earth, in His chosen sanctuary.

In both 1 and 2 *people* should be *peoples* (as generally). The heathen nations are to recognize

and worship Israel's God as the Most High over all the world.

3. Rather, Let them praise Thy great and terrible Name: Holy is He.

Deut. VII. 21.

4. His power is exercised in no arbitrary fashion.

6. Moses, Aaron and Samuel were prevailing intercessors in past time.

God revealed Himself to His people, answering their prayers, but punishing while He pardoned, in order to demonstrate His holiness. So will God continue to deal with His servants. As His power in not arbitrarily exercised, so His mercy is not partial; "Holy is He."

Psalm 133. The presence of God the source of union to His people.

The original thought is of the pilgrims from distant parts gathered together with the inhabitants of the holy city, for the worship of the great festivals. The thought for the Transfiguration is of the gathering together on the mount of representatives of the Old and of the New Covenant, Moses and Elijah with Peter, James and John, around Jesus, Who is proclaimed from heaven as the beloved Son of the Father, Whom all are to hear and obey, in Whom all the promises of the Old Covenant are fulfilled.

2. The sacred anointing of the high-priest which ran down from his head to his beard and to the collar (not skirt) of his robe, to which was fastened the breast-plate inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes, Ex. XXIX. 5–7, XXX. 22–25, Lev.

VIII. 8, 12. The whole nation thus shared symbolically in the consecration of its great representative. So the Holy Spirit with whom our Lord is anointed is imparted from Him the Head to all, even the least and lowest, of the members of His mystical Body, thus giving to all an inner principle of unity, in the common possession of this life. I Cor. XII. 13.

3. When at the festival the brethren from the North sat down in unity with the brethren in the South, it was as if the rich dews of Hermon's forests settled on the sacred hills that stand round Zion. (Kay.)

4. *There*, i.e., in Sion. CXXXII. 17, CXXII. 4.

ST. MICHAEL'S DAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 91. God's providential care, exercised in part through angelic ministrations.

THIS psalm may be understood as a colloquy between angels and a servant of God. v. 1, angels 2, servant, 3–8, angels, 9 *a*, faithful servant, 9 *b*–13, angels, 14–16, God speaks.

"It is St. Paul's fervid exclamation, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' (Rom. VIII. 31) expressed in rich and varied poetry." (Perowne.)

1. As it stands seems to be tautologous. Perhaps it should read, Happy is he that dwelleth . . . that abideth. *Or* the first clause may express conscious and persevering trust in God, the second the reward of such trust. "Loving faith on man's part will be met by faithful love on God's part." (Kay.)

"The enemy shall not be able to do him violence: the son of wickedness shall not hurt him" (such a man). LXXXIX. 23.

shadow. Probably the figure is of the mother-bird protecting her young.

5. Neither sudden assaults of enemies by night nor open attacks by day shall have power to harm thee. All hostility, whether secret or avowed, is meant. (Kirkpatrick.)

8. *Yea*, rather, Only. As Israel at the Red Sea. Ex. XIV. 30, 31.

9 *a*. Either an interrupting exclamation of the

believer, or to be understood, Because thou hast said, Thou art my refuge.

9 *b*. Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation.

11, 12. Cited, with the omission of "in all thy ways," to our Lord in the Temptation as a reason for casting Himself down from the Temple roof. His answer implies that it is only when we are acting in obedience to God's call that we can rely on His protection and aid — not in self-chosen paths of presumption. Matt. IV. 6, Lk. IV. 10, 11.

11. *angels*, as His ministers in the world. Heb. I. 14.

As they ministered at the Birth and in the early years of our Lord, to Him in His Temptation and Agony, and guarded His grave; as they carried Lazarus to rest, and are said to watch over little children. (Matt. XVIII. 10.)

13. Both adder and dragon symbolize deadly malignity.

14. God speaks, confirming the promises made in His name.

known My Name, i.e., God's nature and character as declared in His name.

long life, in O. T. a special blessing and reward, seeing that the future life had not yet been clearly revealed. *We* look forward to endless life in God's more immediate presence. Rev. XXI. 3–5, XXII. 3–5.

16. *salvation*, i.e., rescue from every kind of evil. John X. 27–30.

Psalm 103. The praise of God by men and angels.
(See Circumcision, p. 28.)

ST. MICHAEL'S DAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 34. Jahveh's care for those who fear Him.

AN alphabetical psalm, 1–10 in the character of a hymn, 11–22 of an instruction. The thought and style are of a later date than David. Was it written by some poet-sage who thought of David's experience with Achish (I Sam. XXI. 11 sq.) referred to in the title, as one of the most striking illustrations of the truth which he wished to enforce? (Kirkpatrick.)

5. *lightened.* Their faces looking toward Him are bright with gladness. The earnest gaze of faith and confidence was not in vain.

7. The special reference for Michaelmas. See on XCI. 11. Comp. Dan. VI. 22, II Kings VI. 16.

confounded, i.e., disappointed of their expectation.

8. Cyril of Jerusalem (347) mentions this verse as sung at the Eucharist during the Communion of the people. Comp. Heb. VI. 5, I Pet. II. 3. Make but trial, and you will perceive what His goodness is toward them who fear Him.

9. *saints*, members of the Holy People. For us there should be no separation between federal relationship and personal holiness, since we are members of the Holy Body, and endowed with the Holy Spirit, and so are truly "called to be saints."

10. The strongest beasts of prey, most capable of providing for themselves, may suffer want; not so God's people.

11. If such blessings belong to those who fear the Lord, in what does His fear consist?

12. quoted by St. Peter, I Ep. III. 10 sq.

14. *ensue*, i.e., pursue, follow after. Do not be discouraged if it should need prolonged effort to overtake it.

15. Comp. Ecclus XXXIV. 16.

16. The manifestation of His presence in wrath.

18. Those in whom affliction has borne fruit, and all self-asserting pride has been subdued.

19. No exemption from evils is promised to the righteous man, but out of them all the Lord rescues him. John XII. 27, Heb. V. 7.

20. Quoted with Ex. XII. 46 in John XIX. 36, of the protection of the sacred Body of our Lord, the perfectly Righteous Man.

21. Evil brings the wicked to his death. Rom. VI. 12, Gal. VI. 7, 8, Rev. XXII. 12.

Psalm 148. Restored Israel calls on all in heaven (1–6) and on earth (7–13) to praise Jahveh, Who created and sustains them in their several spheres of being.

2. *His angels* in all their ranks, who worship before His face and who carry out His purposes. Heb. I. 7, 14, Tobit XII. 15, 18.

His hosts, that are as armies at His disposal. Comp. I Kings XXII. 19, II Kings VI. 16, 17, and the title "The LORD of Hosts" as in I Sam. xvii. 45.

3. the heavenly bodies following the heavenly beings.

4. the waters, the great reservoir of waters supposed to exist above the firmament.

6. The heavenly bodies serve with perfect and undeviating obedience a law which they cannot transgress; moral beings, whether angels or men, render the higher service of the free surrender of their will to God's.

7. All creatures here on earth below are to join in the doxology, each a manifestation of God's creative and regulative power; inanimate and animate creation rising up to man — the crown of creation — without distinction of rank or age or sex.

14. Israel's special ground for praise.

the horn. Once more giving them dignity and power.

With higher praise should the redeemed of the Christian Church join the chorus, and with higher still the redeemed at the last, when His servants shall perfectly serve Him. Rev. XIX. 1–10, XXII. 3.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

(MORNING)

Psalm 1. Blessedness of the godly.

PSALM 1 is an introduction to the Psalter, written probably by the compiler of the First Book of the Psalms (1–41), "during the fresh enthusiasm for Ezra's law book (Ezra VIII)." (Cheyne.) The psalm strikes the key-note of the whole Psalter — the faithfulness of God's dealing with man, and the indissoluble connexion between righteousness and blessing.

1. The character of the godly man is described *negatively* by a three-fold contrast: (1) He hath not *walked* in the counsel of the ungodly (this represents the adoption of the principles of the wicked as a rule of life); (2) nor *stood* in the way of sinners (this represents persistence in the practices of notorious offenders); (3) nor *sat* in the seat of scorners (deliberate association with those who openly mock at religion).

2. And *positively:* he does not so much seek what the Law promises or fear what it threatens, but rather delights in it, as holy and just and true.

exercise himself, i.e., meditate.

3. A tree not self-sown, but planted in a chosen spot, a well-watered garden, sheltered from both wind and sun. Ecclus XXIV 14.

water-side, i.e., streams of water.

whatsoever, etc. Comp. John XIV. 13, 14, XV. 16. Desiring what God wills, and placing ourselves at His disposal to carry out His purposes, the righteous are on the winning side.

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

5. The ungodly are not merely like drooping trees in a parched soil. Their instability is more fitly represented by the figure of chaff caught up and scattered by the wind on some exposed threshing-floor.

6. Because of this worthlessness they shall not be able to stand up and maintain their cause when God visits them. Matt. III. 12.

the congregation of the righteous, the true people of God who keep His covenant. Gen. XVII. 1, Matt. XIII. 41. May we be numbered with His saints both here and hereafter!

7. "Divine knowledge cannot be abstract or ineffectual. It involves approval, care, guidance, or abandonment and judgment." (Kirkpatrick.)

Psalm 15. A description of the godly. (See Ascension Day, p. 94.)

Psalm 146. Joyous confidence of the godly.

This is the first of the five Hallelujah Psalms with which the Psalter closes. In the Hebrew each begins and ends with Hallelujah (Praise ye Jahveh). All belong probably to the time of the restoration

of Jerusalem and the dedication of its wall under Nehemiah (Neh. XII. 27–43). This is an anticipation of the final deliverance of God's faithful servants, and of their planting in their true land.

2. Cyrus, who sanctioned the return of the Jews, died shortly afterwards; a subsequent king revoked the edict; though at this time the reigning prince was favorable, his life, if not his power, was uncertain.

3. I Pet. I. 24.

thoughts, i.e., plans and purposes.

4, 5. Contrast with 2, 3. God's power and unchanging faithfulness contrasted with man's feebleness and instability. Comp. Jer. X. 1–16.

7–9. Five clauses each beginning with Jahveh, each of three words in the original. All these corporal and spiritual acts of mercy are fulfilled by Christ, in His own person and through His Church. Luke IV. 17–21. They will be perfectly realized in the new Jerusalem. Rev. XXI. 2–4.

9. Deut. X. 17–21.

turneth it upside down, or aside, out of its course, so that it ends in ruin.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

(EVENING)

Psalm 112. Blessedness of the godly.

2. *mighty upon earth.* The phrase used of Nimrod in Gen. x. 8. "The great ones of the earth have all along sought to build up empires by violence, but in vain. The fear of the Lord is the only stable foundation of power." (Kay.)

generation of the faithful. Gen. XXII. 16, 17, Isa. LIII. 10. It is the saint who acquires true power.

3. Prov. III. 16.

4. Isa. LVIII. 8–12, Mal. IV. 1, 2.

This, which is true throughout the life of the righteous, will be realized perfectly at its end.

5. Happy is the man that is merciful, etc.:
He will carry through successfully his cause in the judgment.

7. Isa. XXVI. 3. As Moses with the Red Sea before and the Egyptian host behind (Ex. XIV. 13, 14), and Jehoshaphat before the Ammonite invaders (2 Chron. XX. 20, 21).

10. Mic. VII. 10, Wisd. III. 9, 10, v. 1–8. Those whom the world despised are found to be chosen of God. Meekness and generosity, which were regarded as folly, have prevailed rather than violence and self-seeking.

Psalm 121. God's unfailing protection of His saints.

"The one ever recurring thought, the one characteristic word of the Psalm is the word *keep*. Six times it is repeated in the last five verses of this short ode. He who is the Maker of the universe, and the Keeper of the nation, is also the Keeper of the individual." (Perowne.)

"This word *Shamar* is the word rendered 'keep,' 'observe,' 'take heed,' in Ps. CXIX. When Israel keeps God's law, God keeps him from evil. Comp. Rev. III. 10." (Kay.)

1. *the hills.* In view of the mountains around Jerusalem, on the last evening of the pilgrimage to the holy city for festivals, during which these Psalms were sung (CXX–CXXXIV).

2. It is not from the mountains of Sion, but from Jahveh who has fixed His earthly dwelling-place there, that help comes. (Kirkpatrick.) He is contrasted with the idols of heathenism. Comp. Jer. X. 10–12.

3, 4. Sung perhaps as they set the night watch.

8. All thy undertakings and occupations through life. And at the departure from this world and the entrance on another. So the Psalm is used at Vespers for the Departed.

Till there be no more going out; for "him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." Rev. III. 12; comp. Deut. XXVIII. 6, Gen. XXVIII. 15.

Psalm 149. The praise of God by His redeemed people.

The deliverance of Israel from Babylon a figure of the final deliverance of God's faithful people from exile and captivity in the world. Perhaps the psalm belongs to the later period of the Maccabees. (1 Macc. IV. 54, XIII. 50–52.) Thanksgiving for their deliverance and restoration may have been mingled in Israel with expectation of vengeance upon those who had been their oppressors, when the Messiah should come. They looked forward to His victories over the heathen. We use the words in a higher sense, as we look for His spiritual reign, and for His final manifestation at the last. Comp. Rev. XI. 18, XIX. 1, 2.

1. By the waters of Babylon they could not sing. But now a new song is put in their mouths. So with the soul set free from the oppression of sin, on admission or restoration to Christian privileges in the Communion of Saints, the fellowship of the faithful. And still more at the last.

3. Jer. XXXI. 4.

4. Lit. He beautifies (makes glorious) the oppressed with deliverance. Isa. LXI. 3.

5. *with*, rather *for* (glory). Because of the glory which is conferred upon them.

Sing for joy upon their beds, where before in the loneliness of the night they consumed themselves with grief and mourning for their shame. Hos. VII. 14, Job XXXV. 10. Or, they can lie down in peace without the fear of being roused to repel a sudden assault, Neh. IV. 23.

No more the foe can harm;
No more of leaguered camp,
And cry of night alarm,
And need of ready lamp.
And yet how nearly had he failed —
How nearly had that foe prevailed!

6. Jer. xxx. 18, xxxi. 14; 2 Macc. xv. 26, 27.

9. To execute upon them the doom written —
An honor this to all His loving (or loved) ones.
Dan. vii. 22.

BURIAL

Psalm 39.

The psalmist (or he in whose name he speaks) is in suffering and near to death. In view of death we repeat the psalm at a burial, and along with the departed. It is the utterance of "one who feels how hopeless the problem of life is, except as seen in the light of God . . . with the deep conviction of personal frailty (6) and sinfulness (9), as well as of the frailty and sinfulness of all men." (Perowne.)

1, 2. He would not by his complaints give occasion to the ungodly to blaspheme, saying that God did not care for His servants.

3. *even from good words*, Or, and had no comfort. (Hebrew, afar from happiness.)

4. *spake* to God in prayer, not to man in complaints.

5. *how long.* The meaning is "how short a time"; may *know* how frail I am (R. V.), so that I may not set my heart on worldly objects, nor repine at their loss.

6. Every man at his best estate is but a breath.

7. *in a vain shadow.* Rather, in mere semblance he walks to and fro: for mere vanity do they make such turmoil. Comp. James iv. 13, 14.

8. "It is this which is so heroic in the Old Testament faith, that in the midst of the riddles of the present, and in view of a future losing itself in a

night of gloom, it casts itself absolutely and without hesitation into the arms of God." (Delitzsch.) How much more should we make this prayer our own, for whom life and incorruption have been brought to light through the Gospel! (2 Tim. I. 10.)

9. he prays to be delivered both from his transgressions and from their punishment.

a rebuke, as they taunt me with my sufferings.

10. I could not complain of man, for it was God's doing;
I could not complain of God, for it was because of my sin.

12. "As easily as the moth-grub, working unseen, destroys goodly raiment, so easily does God's chastisement destroy a man's goodliness, the bodily strength and beauty which make him attractive." (Kirkpatrick.)

14. *A stranger . . . a sojourner*, technical words for aliens residing in a country to which they do not belong. So the O. T. servant of God thought of himself as God's guest for awhile only in the upper world, where alone His presence could be enjoyed. In a somewhat different sense Christians regard themselves as strangers and pilgrims in this world, and dependent on God's protection. I Pet. II. 11, I Chron. XXIX. 15.

15. *Spare me*, or, Avert Thy frown.
recover my strength, or, smile again.

Psalm 90.

(See Psalms for the Circumcision, p. 25.)

DAILY MORNING PRAYER

Psalm 95. An invitation to worship.

PROBABLY composed (with the rest of the group xciii–c) for the Dedication of the Second Temple, B.C. 516.

LXX ascribes the psalm to David. It may have been based on an earlier psalm of his. Heb. iv. 7 may mean only "in the psalter" commonly called by David's name.

The deliverance and return from Babylon would recall the Exodus and the Wilderness. God was again giving His people rest; they must beware of forfeiting it by an evil heart of unbelief and disobedience, through which their fathers had been shut out from the rest of Canaan. Heb. iv. 7. The warning against unbelief and disobedience following the invitation to the worship of God implies that if we would acceptably praise God we must come before Him with a readiness to obey His word. So the psalm is said as a daily introduction to our recitation of the psalter. In this way it has been used in the Christian Church from the time of St. Athanasius (in the fourth century).

1–7. A Call to worship.

1. *the strength,* or rock.

2. *come before,* rather, hasten into (his presence) with joyful alacrity.

3–5. the first ground for worship of Jahveh: He is the Creator of all, from whom all come, by whom all consist.

3. As such He is contrasted with the false gods of Babylon.

4. *corners*, or deep places. Job xxxviii. 16.

strength, etc., or the heights of the mountains.

The nethermost recesses of the earth, as well as inaccessible summits of the mountains are in God's hand.

5. *prepared.* He gave shape and beauty to what before was without form and void. It matters not whether this is thought of as accomplished by a single word or by long processes of evolution. The guiding hand was His.

6, 7. The invitation to worship is repeated, for a second reason, that Jahveh, the Creator of the World, is the Maker of Israel, choosing them to be His people, and endowing them with wondrous prerogatives, Rom. ix. 4, 5. Comp. Ps. cxlix. 2, Deut. xxxii. 6, 15. Still greater privileges does He bestow upon the Christian Church, Heb. xii. 22–24, which He guides and protects like a flock with His hand. John x. 28.

8–11. A warning against disobedience.

8. *Today* may all this be realized, if only ye will hear His voice; this voice which says, "Harden not your hearts" as at Meribah (i.e., strife) and as in the day of Massah (i.e., temptation). These names were given to Rephidim, where the people murmured on account of the failure of water. Ex. xvii. 1–7, Num. xx. 1–13.

9. They said, Is the LORD among us? How often are *we* inclined in times of difficulty and trouble to doubt God's presence among us, to require that He shall prove His presence by removing suffering instead of by carrying us through it, perfected by this very discipline! John XII. 27, 28, Heb. II. 10, XII. 11.

10. *have not known*, even after all that they have seen of my doings.

11. *unto whom*, rather, wherefore.

my rest, i.e., the place of settlement intended for them, the abode of God. Num. XIV. 23, 30, Deut. XII. 9.

8–11. For these warning verses the American Prayer Book substitutes verses 9 and 13 of the following psalm.

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.

in the beauty of holiness, i.e., in holy array, such as the priests wear, befitting the majesty of Jahveh. With the inner vesture of virtuous habits should the priestly body of the Christian Church be clothed to show forth His praise, and to call all nations to His service. Rev. I. 5, 6, Col. I. 3–6.

for He cometh. The deliverance of Israel from Babylon was a manifestation of Jahveh, of His might and of His faithfulness. This was a pledge of His ultimate triumph over all who oppose Him

and His righteous reign. So there are continually repeated Comings of the Son of Man from the destruction of Jerusalem to His final manifestation. Each involves a *judgment*, in the acceptance of those who are on His side, and the confusion of His enemies. Isa. XLII. 13–17, LXVI. 18–24, Zech. XIV, Mark XIII, I Cor. XV. 24–28.

judge with righteousness. This is our great cause for rejoicing that the LORD, the righteous Judge, reigneth. The world is not under the dominion of rival deities, acting in arbitrary fashion, with selfish, cruel, unjust, immoral ends and standards. The supreme ruler is the All Holy One. Just in proportion as we are on the side of right and truth shall we welcome His manifestation, and pray, Thy kingdom come, Come, Lord Jesus.

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